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THE

ORLANDO FURIOSO

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

FROM THE ITALIAN OF

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO

WITH NOTES

BY

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THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Rogero Richardetto from the pains
Of fire preserves, doomed by Marsilius dead:
He to Rogero afterwards explains
Fully the cause while he to death was led.
Them mournful Aldigier next entertains,
And with them the ensuing morning sped,
Vivian and Malagigi to set free;
To Bertolagi sold for hire and fee.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXV.

I.

Oh! mighty springs of war in youthful breast,
Impetuous force of love, and thirst of praise!
Nor yet which most avails is known aright:
For each by turns its opposite outweighs.
Within the bosom here of either knight,
Honour, be sure, and duty strongly sways:
For the amorous strife between them is delayed,
Till to the Moorish camp they furnish aid.

II.

Yet Love sways more; for, save that the command
Was laid upon them by their lady gay,
Neither would in that battle sheathe the brand,
Till he was crowned with the victorious bay;
And Agramant might vainly with his band,
For either knight's expected succour, stay.
Then Love is not of evil nature still;
—He can at times do good, if often ill.

III.

'Twas now, suspending all their hostile rage,
One and the other paynim cavalier,
The Moorish host from siege to disengage,
For Paris, with the gentle lady, steer;
And with them goes as well that dwarfish page,
Who tracked the footsteps of the Tartar peer,
Till he had brought the warrior front to front,
In presence with the jealous Rodomont.

IV.

They at a mead arrived, where, in disport,
Knights were reposing by a stream, one pair
Disarmed, another casqued in martial sort;
And with them was a dame of visage fair.
Of these in other place I shall report,
Not now; for first Rogero is my care,
That good Rogero, who, as I have shown,
Into a well the magic shield had thrown.

V.

He from that well a mile is hardly gone
Ere he a courier sees arrive at speed,
Of those dispatched by King Troyano's son
To knights whom he awaited in his need;
From him Rogero hears that 'so foredone
'By Charles are those who hold the paynim creed,
'They will, save quickly succoured in the strife,
'As quickly forfeit liberty and life.'

VI.

Rogero stood awhile in pensive case,
Whom many warring thoughts at once opprest:
But neither fitted was the time nor place
To make his choice, or judge what promised best.
The courier he dismist, and turned his face
Whither he with the damsel was addrest;
Whom aye the Child so hurried on her way,
He left her not a moment for delay.

VII.

Pursuing thence their ancient road again,
They reached a city, with the westering sun;
Which, in the midst of France, from Charlemagne
Marsilius had in that long warfare won:
Nor them to interrupt or to detain,
At drawbridge or at gate, was any one:
Though in the fosse, and round the palisade,
Stood many men, and piles of arms were laid.

VIII.

Because the troop about that fortress see
Accompanying him, the well-known dame,
They to Rogero leave the passage free,
Nor even question him from whence he came.
Reaching the square, of evil company
He finds it full, and bright with ruddy flame;
And, in the midst, is manifest to view
The youth condemned, with face of pallid hue.

IX.

As on the stripling's face he turns his eyes,
Which hangs declined and wet with frequent tear,
Rogero thinks he Bradamant descries;
So much the youth resembles her in cheer:
More sure the more intently he espies
Her face and shape: when thus the cavalier;
" Or this is Bradamant, or I no more
" Am the Rogero which I was before.

X.

" She hath adventured with too daring will,
" In rescue of the youth condemned to die;
" And, for the enterprise has ended ill,
" Hath here been taken, as I see. Ah! why
" Was she so hot her purpose to fulfil,
" That she must hither unattended hie!
" —But I thank Heaven, that hither have I made:
" Since I am yet in time to lend her aid."

XI.

He drew his falchion without more delay,
(His lance was broken at the other town)[1],
And, through the unarmed people making way,
Wounding flank, paunch, and bosom, bore them down.
He whirled his weapon, and, amid the array,
Smote some across the gullet, cheek, or crown.
Screaming, the dissipated rabble fled;
The most with cloven limbs or broken head.

XII.

As while at feed, in full security,
A troop of fowl along the marish wend,
If suddenly a falcon from the sky
Swoop mid the crowd, and one surprise and rend,
The rest dispersing, leave their mate to die,
And only to their own escape attend;
So scattering hadst thou seen the frighted throng,
When young Rogero pricked that crowd among.

XIII.

Rogero smites the head from six or four,
Who in escaping from the field are slow.
He to the breast divides as many more,
And countless to the eyes and teeth below.
I grant no helmets on their heads they wore,
But there were shining iron caps enow;
And, if fine helmets did their temples press,
His sword would cut as deep, or little less.

XIV.

Such good Rogero's force and valour are,
As never now-a-days in warrior dwell;
Nor yet in rampant lion, nor in bear,
Nor (whether home or foreign) beast more fell.
Haply with him the earthquake might compare,
Or haply the great devil—not he of hell—
But he who is my lord's [g], who moves in fire,
And parts heaven, earth, and ocean in his ire.

XV.

At every stroke he never less o'erthrew
Than one, and oftener two, upon the plain;
And four, at once, and even five he slew;
So that a hundred in a thought were slain.
The sword Rogero from his girdle drew
As knife cuts curd, divides their plate and chain.
Falerina in Orgagna's garden made,
To deal Orlando death, that cruel blade [3].

XVI.

But to have forged that falchion sorely rued,
Who saw her garden wasted by the brand.
What wreck, what ruin then must have ensued,
From this when wielded by such warrior's hand?
If e'er Rogero force, e'er fury shewed,
If e'er his mighty valour well was scanned,
'Twas here; 'twas here employed; 'twas here displayed;
In the desire to give his lady aid.

XVII.

As hare from hound unslipt, that helpless train
Defends itself against the cavalier.
Many lay dead upon the cumbered plain,
And numberless were they who fled in fear.
Meanwhile the damsel had unloosed the chain
From the youth's hands, and him in martial gear
Was hastening, with what speed she might, to deck,
With sword in hand and shield about his neck [4].

XVIII.

He, who was angered sore, as best he cou'd,
Sought to avenge him of that evil crew;
And gave such signal proofs of hardihood,
As stamped him for a warrior good and true.
The sun already in the western flood
Had dipt his gilded wheels, what time the two,
Valiant Rogero and his young compeer,
Victorious issued, of the city clear.

XIX.

When now Rogero and the stranger knight,
Clear of the city-gates, the champaigne reach,
The youth repays, with praises infinite,
Rogero in kind mode and cunning speech,
Who him, although unknown, had sought to right,
At risk of life, and prays his name to teach
That he may know to whom his thanks he owed
For such a mighty benefit bestowed.

XX.

"The visage of my Bradamant I see,
"The beauteous features and the beauteous cheer,"
Rogero said; "and yet the suavity
"I of her well-known accents do not hear:
"Nor such return of thanks appears to be
"In place towards her faithful cavalier.
"And if in very sooth it is the same,
"How has the maid so soon forgot my name?"

XXI.

In wary wise, intent the truth to find,
Rogero said, " You have I seen elsewhere;
" And have again, and yet again, divined,
" Yet know I not, nor can remember where.
" Say it, yourself, if it returns to mind,
" And, I beseech, your name as well declare:
" Which I would gladly hear, in the desire
" To know whom I have rescued from the fire."

XXII.

" —Me, it is possible you may have seen,
" I know not when nor where (the youth replied);
" For I too range the world, in armour sheen,
" Seeking adventure strange on every side;
" Or haply it a sister may have been,
" Who to her waist the knightly sword has tied;
" Born with me at a birth; so like to view,
" The family discerns not who is who.

XXIII.

" You not first, second, or even fourth will be,
" Who have in this their error had to learn;
" Nor father, brother, nor even mother me
" From her (such our resemblance) can discern.
" 'Tis true, this hair, which short and loose you see,
" In manly guise, and hers, with many a turn,
" And in long tresses wound about her brow,
" Wide difference made between us two till now.

XXIV.

" But since the day, that, wounded by a Moor
" In the head (a story tedious to recite)
" A holy man, to heal the damsel's sore,
" Cut short to the mid-ear her tresses bright[5],
" Excepting sex and name, there is no more
" One from the other to distinguish: hight
" I Richardetto am, Bradamant she;
" Rinaldo's brother and his sister we.

XXV.

" And to displease you were I not afraid,
" You with a wonder would I entertain,
" Which chanced from my resemblance to the maid;
" Begun in pleasure, finishing in pain."
He to whom nought more pleasing could be said,
And to whose ears there was no sweeter strain
Than what in some sort on his lady ran,
Besought the stripling so, that he began.

XXVI.

" It so fell out, that as my sister through
" The neighbouring wood pursued her path, a wound
" Was dealt the damsel by a paynim crew,
" Which her by chance without a helmet found.
" And she was fain to trim the locks which grew
" Clustering about the gash, to make her sound
" Of that ill cut which in her head she bore:
" Hence, shorn, she wandered through the forest hoar.

XXVII.

" Ranging, she wandered to a shady font;
" Where, worn and troubled, she, in weary wise,
" Lit from her courser and disarmed her front,
" And, couched upon the greensward, closed her eyes.
" A tale more pleasing than what I recount
" In story there is none, I well surmise:
" Thither repaired young Flordespine of Spain,
" Who in that wood was hunting with her train.

XXVIII.

" And, when she found my sister in the shade,
" Covered, except her face, with martial gear,
" —In place of spindle, furnished with the blade—
" Believed that she beheld a cavalier:
" The face and manly semblance she surveyed,
" Till conquered was her heart: with courteous cheer
" She wooed the maid to hunt with her, and past
" With her alone into that holt at last.

XXIX.

" When now she had her, fearless of surprise,
" Safe in a solitary place, that dame,
" By slow degrees, in words and amorous wise,
" Showed her deep-wounded heart; with sighs of flame,
" Breathed from her inmost breast, with burning eyes,
" She spake her soul sick with desire; became
" Now pale, now red; nor longer self-controlled,
" Ravished a kiss, she waxed so passing bold.

XXX.

" My sister was assured the huntress maid
" Falsely conceited her a man to be;
" Nor in that need could she afford her aid;
" And found herself in sore perplexity.
' 'Tis better that I now dispel (she said)
' The foolish thought she feeds, and that in me
' The damsel should a gentle woman scan,
' Rather than take me for a craven man.'

XXXI.

" And she said well: for cravenhood it were
" Befitting man of straw, not warrior true,
" With whom so bright a lady deigned to pair,
" So wonderous sweet and full of nectarous dew,
" To clack like a poor cuckow to the fair,
" Hanging his coward wing, when he should woo.
" Shaping her speech to this in wary mode,
" My sister ' that she was a damsel, showed;

XXXII.

' That, like Camilla and like Hyppolite,
' Sought fame in battle-field, and near the sea,
' In Afric, in Arzilla, saw the light;
' To shield and spear enured from infancy.'
" A spark this quenched not; nor yet burned less bright
" The enamoured damsel's kindled phantasy.
" Too tardy came the salve to ease the smart:
" So deep had Love already driven his dart.

XXXIII.

" Nor yet less fair to her my sister's face
" Appeared, less fair her ways, less fair her guise;
" Nor yet the heart returned into its place,
" Which joyed itself within those dear-loved eyes.
" Flordespine deems the damsel's iron case,
" To her desire some hope of ease supplies;
" And when she thinks she is indeed a maid,
" Laments and sobs, with mighty woe downweighed.

XXXIV.

" He who had marked her sorrow and lament,
" That day, himself had sorrowed with the fair.
' What pains (she said) did ever wight torment,
' So cruel, but that mine more cruel were?
' I need not to accomplish my intent,
' In other love, impure or pure, despair;
' The rose I well might gather from the thorn:
' *My* longing only is of hope forlorn.

XXXV.

' If 'twas thy pleasure, Love, to have me shent,
' Because my glad estate thine anger stirred,
' Thou with some torture might'st have been content
' On other lovers used; but never word
' Have I found written of a female bent
' On love of female, mid mankind or herd.
' Woman to woman's beauty still is blind;
' Nor ewe delights in ewe, nor hind in hind[6].

XXXVI.

'Tis only I, on earth, in air, or sea,
Who suffer at thy hands such cruel pain;
And this thou hast ordained, that I may be
The first and last example in thy reign.
Foully did Ninus' wife and impiously
For her own son a passion entertain;
Loved was Pasiphäe's bull and Myrrha's sire;
But mine is madder than their worst desire.

XXXVII.

Here female upon male had set her will;
Had hope; and, as I hear, was satisfied.
Pasiphäe the wooden cow did fill:
Others, in other mode, their want supplied.
But, had he flown to me,—with all his skill,
Dan Dædalus had not the noose untied:
For one too diligent hath wreathed these strings;
Even Nature's self, the puissantest of things.

XXXVIII.

" So grieves the maid, so goads herself and wears;
" And shows no haste her sorrowing to forego;
" Sometimes her face, sometimes her tresses tears,
" And levels at herself the vengeful blow.
" In pity, Bradamant the sorrow shares,
" And is constrained to hear the tale of woe.
" She studies to divert, with fruitless pain,
" The strange and mad desire; but speaks in vain.

XXXIX.

" She, who requires assistance, not support,
" Still more laments herself, with grief opprest.
" By this the waning day was growing short,
" For the low sun was crimsoning the west;
" A fitting hour for those to seek a port,
" Who would not in the wood set up their rest:
" When to this city, near her sylvan haunt,
" Young Flordespine invited Bradamant[7].

XL.

" My sister the request could ill deny;
" And so they came together to the place,
" Where, but for you, by that ill squadron I
" Had been compelled the cruel flame to face:
" There Flordespina made her family
" Caress and do my sister no small grace;
" And, having in a female robe arraid,
" Past her on all beholders for a maid.

XLI.

" Because perceiving vantage there was none
" In the male cheer by which she was misled,
" The damsel held it wise, reproach to shun,
" Which might by any carping tongue be said.
" And this the rather; that the ill, which one
" Of the two garments in her mind had bred,
" Now with the other which revealed the cheat,
" She would assay to drive from her conceit.

XLII.

" The ladies share one common bed that night,
" Their bed the same, but different their repose.
" One sleeps, one groans and weeps in piteous plight,
" Because her wild desire more fiercely glows;
" And on her wearied eyes should slumber light,
" All is deceitful *that* brief slumber shows.
" To her it seems, as if relenting Heaven
" A better sex to Bradamant has given.

XLIII.

" As the sick man with burning thirst distrest,
" If he should sleep,—ere he that wish fulfil,—
" Aye in his troubled, interrupted, rest,
" Remembers him of every once-seen rill:
" So is the damsel's fancy still possest,
" In sleep, with images which glad her will.
" Then from the empty dreams which crowd her brain,
" She wakes, and, waking, finds the vision vain.

XLIV.

" What vows she vowed, how oft that night she prayed,
" To all her gods and Mahound, in despair!
" —That they, by open miracle, the maid
" Would change, and give her other sex to wear.
" But all the lady's vows were ill appaid,
" And haply Heaven as well might mock the prayer;
" Night fades, and Phœbus raises from the main
" His yellow head, and lights the world again.

XLV.

" On issuing from their bed when day is broken,
" The wretched Flordespina's woes augment:
" For of departing Bradamant had spoken,
" Anxious to scape from that embarrassment.
" The princess a prime jennet, as a token,
" Forced on my parting sister, when she went;
" And gilded housings, and a surcoat brave,
" Which her own hand had richly broidered, gave.

XLVI.

" Her Flordespine accompanied some way,
" Then, weeping, to her castle made return.
" So fast my sister pricked, she reached that day
" Mount Alban; we who for her absence mourn,
" Mother and brother, greet the martial may,
" And her arrival with much joy discern:
" For hearing nought, we feared that she was dead,
" And had remained in cruel doubt and dread.

XLVII.

" Unhelmed, we wondered at her hair, which passed
" In braids about her brow, she whilom wore;
" Nor less we wondered at the foreign cast
" Of the embroidered surcoat which she wore:
" And she to us rehearsed, from first to last,
" The story I was telling you before;
' How she was wounded in the wood, and how,
' For cure, were shorn the tresses from her brow;

XLVIII.

' And next how came on her, with labour spent,
' —As by the stream she slept—that huntress bright
' And how, with her false semblance well content,
' She from the train withdrew her out of sight.
' Nor left she any thing of her lament
' Untold; which touched with pity every wight;
' Told how the maid had harboured her, and all
' Which past, till she revisited her Hall.'

XLIX.

" Of Flordespine I knew: and I had seen
" In Saragossa and in France the maid;
" To whose bewitching eyes and lovely mien
" My youthful appetite had often strayed:
" Yet her I would not make my fancy's queen;
" For hopeless love is but a dream and shade:
" Now I this proffered in such substance view,
" Straitway the ancient flame breaks forth anew.

L.

" Love, with this hope, constructs his subtle ties;
" Who other threads for me would vainly weave.
" 'Tis thus he took me, and explained the guise
" In which I might the long-sought boon achieve.
' Easy it were the damsel to surprise;
' For as the likeness others could deceive,
' Which I to Bradamant, my sister, bear,
' This haply might as well the maid ensnare[8].'

LI.

" Whether I speed or no, I hold it wise,
" Aye to pursue whatever gives delight.
" I with no other of my plan devise,
" Nor any seek to counsel me aright.
" Well knowing where the suit of armour lies
" My sister doffed, I thither go at night;
" Her armour and her steed to boot I take,
" Nor stand expecting until daylight break.

LII.

" I rode all night—Love served me as a guide—
" To seek the home of beauteous Flordespine;
" And there arrived, before in ocean's tide
" The western sun had hid his orbit sheen.
" A happy man was he who fastest hied
" To tell my coming to the youthful queen[9];
" Expecting from that lady, for his pain,
" Favour and goodly guerdon to obtain.

LIII.

" For Bradamant the guests mistake me all,
" —As you yourself but now—so much the more,
" That I have both the courser and the pall
" With which she left them but the day before.
" Flordespine comes at little interval,
" With such festivity and courteous lore,
" And with a face, so jocund and so gay,
" She could not, for her life, more joy display.

LIV.

" Her beauteous arms about my neck she throws,
" And fondly clasping me, my mouth she kist.
" If to my inmost heart the arrow goes,
" Which Love directs, may well by you be wist.
" She leads me to her chamber of repose.
" In haste, nor suffers other to assist
" In taking off my panoply of steel;
" Disarming me herself from head to heel.

LV.

" Then, ordering from her store a costly vest,
" She spread it, and—as I a woman were—
" The lady me in that rich garment drest,
" And in a golden net confined my hair.
" I gravely moved my eye-balls, nor confest,
" By gesture or by look, the sex I bear.
" My voice, which might discover the deceit,
" I tuned so well that none perceived the cheat.

LVI.

" Next to the hall, where dame and cavalier
" In crowds are gathered, we united go;
" Who make to us such court and goodly cheer,
" As men to queen or high-born lady show.
" Here oft I laughed at some, with secret jeer,
" Who, knowing not the sex concealed below
" My flowing robe of feminine array,
" Wooed me with wishful eyes in wanton way.

LVII.

" When more advanced is now the festive night,
" And the rich board—board plenteously purveyed
" With what in season was most exquisite—
" Has been some time removed, the royal maid
" Expects not till I of myself recite
" The cause, which thither me anew conveyed:
" By her own courtesy and kindness led,
" That lady prays me to partake her bed.

LVIII.

" Damsels and dames withdrawn—with all the rest—
" Pages and chamberlains, when now we lay,
" One and the other, in our bed undrest,
" With kindled torches, counterfeiting day;
' Marvel not, lady,' (her I thus addrest,)
' That I return after such short delay;
' For, haply, thou imagined, that again
' Thou shouldst not see me until Heaven knows when.

LIX.

' The reason I departed from thy side,
' And next of my return, explained shall be.
' Could I unto thy fever have applied,
' By longer sojourn here, a remedy,
' I in thy service would have lived and died,
' Nor would have been an hour away from thee:
' But seeing how my stay increased thy woe,
' I, who could do no better, fixed to go.

LX.

'Into the middle of a wood profound
'By chance I from the beaten pathway strayed:
'Where near me plaintive cries I hear resound,
'As of a woman who intreated aid.
'To a lake of crystal I pursue the sound,
'And, there, amid the waves, a naked maid
'Caught on the fish-hook of a Faun, survey,
'Who would devour alive his helpless prey.

LXI.

'Upon the losel, sword in hand, I ran,
'And, for I could not aid in other wise,
'Bereft of life that evil fisherman.
'She in an instant to the water flies.
—'*Me hast thou helped not vainly,*' (she began)
'*And well shalt be rewarded—with what prize*
'*Thou canst demand—for know I am a nymph,*
'*And have my dwelling in this crystal lymph*[10];

LXII.

'*And power is mine to work portentous ends;*
'*Nature and Elements I force: thy prayer*
'*Shape to the scope to which my strength extends,*
'*And leave its satisfaction to my care.*
'*Charmed by my song the moon from Heaven descends;*
'*Fire can I freeze, and harden liquid air;*
'*And I at times have stopt the sun, and stirred*
'*This earth beneath me by a simple word.*'

LXIII.

" Treasure I covet not, nor yet aspire
" O'er land or people to hold sovereign sway;
" Nor greater strength nor valour would acquire,
" Nor fame in every warfare bear away;
" But only to accomplish thy desire,
" Entreat the damsel she will show some way.
" Nor one nor other method I forestall;
" But to her choice refer me, all in all.

LXIV.

" Scarce my demand was made, before mine eye
" Beneath the lymph engulphed that lady viewed:
" Nor answered she my prayer, but, for reply,
" Me with the enchanted element bedewed;
" Which has no sooner touched my face than I,
" I know not how, am utterly transmewed:
" I see, I feel—yet doubting what I scan—
" Feel, I am changed from woman into man[11].

LXV.

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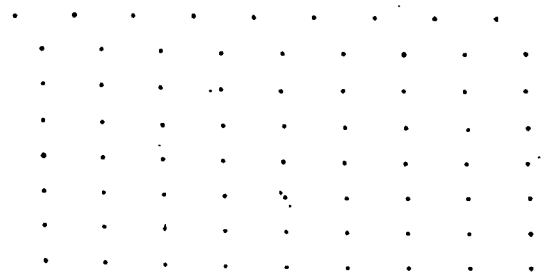
LXVI.

LXVII.



LXVIII.

LXIX.

LXX.

" The thing remained concealed between us two;
" So that our bliss endured some months; at last
" We were espied; and, as I sorely rue,
" The tidings to the Spanish monarch past.
" Thou that whilere preserved'st me from the crew,
" Which me into the flames designed to cast,
" By this mayst fully comprehend the rest;
" But God alone can read my sorrowing breast."

LXXI.

So Richardetto spake, and by his say
Made the dark path they trod less irksome be.
Up a small height this while their journey lay,
Girdled with cliff and cavern, drear to see.
Bristling with rocks, a steep and narrow way
Was to that rugged hill the stubborn key;
A town, called Agrismontè, crowned the steep,
Which Aldigier of Clermont had in keep.

LXXII.

Bastard of Buovo, brother to the pair,
Sir Vivian and Sir Malagigi hight:
Who him Gerardo's lawful son declare,
Are witnesses of little worth and light.
—This, as it may!—strong, valiant, wise, and ware,
Liberal, humane, and courteous was the knight;
And on the fortress of its absent lord,
By night and day, kept faithful watch and ward.

LXXIII.

His cousin Richardetto, as behoved,
Was courteously received by Aldigier;
Who him as dearly as a brother loved,
And made Rogero for his sake good cheer;
But not with wonted welcome;—inly moved—
He even wore a visage sad and drear:
For he, that day, ill-tidings had received,
And hence in heart and face the warrior grieved.

LXXIV.

To Richardetto he exclaims, instead
Of greeting; "Evil news are hither blown.
"By a sure messenger, to-day I read
"That faithless Bertolagi of Bayonne,
"With barbarous Lanfusa has agreed,
"And costly spoils makes over to that crone;
"Who will consign to him the brethren twain,
"Thy Malagigi and thy Viviane;

LXXV.[c]

" These she, since Ferrau took them, aye has stayed
" Imprisoned in a dark and evil cell[12];
" Till the discourteous and foul pact was made
" With that false Maganzese of whom I tell;
" And them to-morrow, to a place conveyed
" 'Twixt Bayonne and a town of his, will sell
" To him, who will be present, to advance
" The price of the most precious blood in France.

LXXVI.

" One, at a gallop, even now, to report
" Tidings to our Rinaldo of the wrong,
" I sent; but fear that he can ill resort
" To him in time, the journey is so long.
" Men have I not to sally from my fort;
" And my power halts where my desire is strong.
" The traitor will the knights, if rendered, slay;
" Nor know I what to do nor what to say."

LXXVII.

Sir Richardetto the ill news displease,
And (as they him) displease in equal wise
Rogero; who, when silent both he sees,
Nor able any counsel to devise,
Exclaims with mickle daring; " Be at ease;
" I challenge for myself the whole emprize;
" And, to set free your brethren, in my hand
" More than a thousand shall avail this brand.

LXXVIII.

" I ask not men, I ask not aid; my spear
" Is, I believe, sufficient to the feat.
" I only ask of you a guide to steer
" Me to the place where for the exchange they meet:
" I even in this place will make you hear
" Their cries, who for that evil bargain treat."
He said; nor to *one* listener of the twain,
That had beheld his actions, spake in vain.

LXXIX.

The other heard him not, or heard at most
As we great talkers hear, who little do:
But Richardetto took aside their host
And told, 'how him he from the fire withdrew;
'And how he was assured, beyond his boast,
'He would in time and place his prowess shew.'
'Twas now that better audience than before
Aldigier lent, and set by him great store;

LXXX.

And at the feast, where Plenty for the three
Emptied her horn, him honoured as his lord.
Here they conclude they can the brethren free
Without more succour from their gaoler's ward.
This while Sleep seized on lord and family,
Save young Rogero: no repose afford
To him the thoughts, which evermore molest,
And, rankling in his bosom, banish rest.

LXXXI.

The siege of Agramant, to him that day
Told by the messenger, he has at heart.
He well discerns that every least delay
Will be dishonour. 'What a ceaseless smart
'Will scorn inflict, what shame will him appay,
'If he against his sovereign lord take part?
'Oh! what foul cowardice, how foul a crime
'His baptism will appear at such a time!'

LXXXII.

That true religion had the stripling swayed
Men might at any other time conceive:
But now, when needed was the warrior's aid
From siege the Moorish monarch to relieve,
That Fear and Baseness had more largely weighed,
In his design, would every one believe,
Than any preference of a better creed:
This thought makes good Rogero's bosom bleed.

LXXXIII.

Nor less to quit his Queen, her leave unsought,
Did with Rogero's other griefs combine:
Now *this* and now *that* care upon him wrought;
Which diversely his doubtful heart incline:
The unhappy lover fruitlessly had thought
To find her at the abode of Flordespine;
Whither together went (as told whilere),
To succour Richardetto, maid and peer.

LXXXIV.

He next bethinks him of the promise plight
To meet at Vallombrosa's sanctuary,
Deems her gone thither, and that 'twill excite
Her wonderment himself not there to see.
'Could he at least a message send or write,
'That he with reason might not censured be,
'Because not only he had disobeyed,
'But was departed hence, and nothing said!'

LXXXV.

He, having thought on many things, in the end
Resolves on writing what behoves; and, though
He knows not how his letter he shall send,
In the assurance it will safely go,
This hinders not; he thinks that, as they wend,
Chance in his way some faithful Post may throw;
Nor more delays: up leaps the restless knight,
And calls for pen and paper, ink and light [13].

LXXXVI.

That which is needed, in obedience meet,
Aldigier's valets bring, a careful band.
The youth begins to write; and, first, to greet
The maid, as wonted courtesies demand;
Next tells, 'how Agramant has sent to entreat,
'In his dispatches, succour at his hand;
'And, save he quickly to his comfort goes,
'Must needs be slain or taken by his foes.'

LXXXVII.

Then adds, 'his sovereign being so bested,
'And praying him for succour in his pain,
'She must perceive what blame upon his head
'Would light, if Agramant applied in vain;
'And, since with her he is about to wed,
''Tis fitting he should keep him without stain;
'For ill he deems a union could endure
'Between aught foul and her so passing pure.

LXXXVIII.

'And if he erst a name, renowned and clear,
'Had laboured to procure by actions fair,
'And having gained it thus, he held it dear,
'—If this had sought to keep—with greater care
'He kept it now,—and with a miser's fear
'Guarded the treasure she with him would share;
'Who, though distinct in body and in limb,
'When wedded, ought to be one soul with him;'

LXXXIX.

And, as he erst by word, he now explained
Anew by writing, 'that the period o'er,
'For which he was to serve his king constrained,
'Unless it were his lot to die before,
'He would in deed a christian be ordained,
'As in resolve he had been evermore;
'And of her kin, Rinaldo and her sire,
'Her afterwards in wedlock would require.

XC.

" I would," he said, " relieve, with your good will,
" My king, besieged by Charlemagne's array,
" That the misjudging rabble, prone to ill,
" Might never, to my shame and scandal, say;
' Rogero, in fair wind and weather, still
' Waited upon his sovereign, night and day,
' And now that Fortune to King Charles is fled,
' Has with that conquering lord his ensign spread.'

XCI.

" I fifteen days or twenty ask, that I
" Yet once again may to our army speed;
" So that, by me from leaguering enemy
" The African cantonments may be freed:
" I will some fit and just occasion spy,
" Meanwhile, to justify my change of creed.
" I for my honour make this sole request;
" Then wholly yours for life, in all things, rest[19]."

XCII.

Rogero in such words his thoughts exposed,
Which never could by me be fully showed;
And added more, nor from his task reposed,
Until the crowded paper overflowed:
He next the letter folded and enclosed,
And sealed it, and within his bosom stowed;
In hopes to meet next morning by the way
One who might covertly that writ convey.

XCIII.

When he had closed the sheet, that amorous knight
His eyelids closed as well, and rest ensued:
For Slumber came and steeped his wearied might
In balmy moisture, from a branch imbued
With Lethe's water; and he slept till—white
And red—a rain of flowers the horizon strewed,
Painting the joyous east with colours gay;
When from her golden dwelling broke the day:

XCIV.

And when the greenwood birds 'gan, far and wide,
Greet the returning light with gladsome strain,
Sir Aldigier (who wished to be the guide,
Upon that journey, of the warlike twain,
Who would in succour of those brethren ride,
To rescue them from Bertolagi's chain)
Was first upon his feet; and either peer
Issues as well from bed, when him they hear.

XCV.

When clad and thoroughly in arms arrayed—
Rogero with the cousins took his way,
Having that pair already warmly prayed
The adventure on himself alone to lay:
But these, by love for those two brethren swayed,
And deeming it discourtesy to obey,
Stood out against his prayer, more stiff than stone,
Nor would consent that he should wend alone.

XCVI.

True to the time and place of change, they hie
Whither Sir Aldigier's advices teach;
And there survey an ample band who lie
Exposed to fierce Apollo's heat; in reach,
Nor myrtle-tree nor laurel they descry,
Nor tapering cypress, ash, nor spreading beech:
But naked gravel with low shrubs discerned,
Undelved by mattock and by share unturned.

XCVII.

Those three adventurous warriors halted where
A path went through the uncultivated plain,
And saw a knight arrive upon the lair,
Who, flourished o'er with gold, wore plate and chain,
And on green field that beauteous bird and rare,
Which longer than an age extends its reign.
No more, my lord; for at my canto's close
I find myself arrived, and crave repose.

NOTES TO CANTO XXV.

1.

His lance was broken at the other town.

Stanza xi. line 2.

At Altaripa, where he had to contend with Guido the savage and the other champions of Pinnabel.

2.

Or haply the great devil—not he of hell—
But he who is my lord's, &c.

Stanza xiv. lines 6 and 7.

A piece of artillery belonging to his patron, Alphonso of Este, which, we are told, was so denominated.

3.

Falerina in Orgagna's garden made,
To deal Orlando death, that cruel blade.

Stanza xv. lines 7 and 8.

Falerina made this sword Balisarda, which would cut even enchanted substances, for the purpose mentioned in the text, in a garden in Orgagna; which is the seat of many marvels in the INNAMORATO. Orlando, however, anticipated her, foiled her enchantments, sacked her garden, and made her prisoner,

whom he surprised in the act of looking at herself in the polished surface of the sword which she had manufactured for his destruction. The INNAMORATO, book ii.

4.

Was hastening, with what speed she might, to deck,
With sword in hand, and shield about his neck.
Stanza xvii. lines 7 and 8.

Such was the usual mode of equipping a knight; whose small shield so disposed was no impediment to the action of either arm when necessary, and could be braced at pleasure.

5.

A holy man, to heal the damsel's sore,
Cut short to the mid-ear her tresses bright.
Stanza xxiv. lines 3 and 4.

A hermit with whom she took refuge after the accident. It is the repetition of a story told in The INNAMORATO.

6.

'Thou with some torture might'st have been content
'On other lovers used; but never word
'Have I found written of a female bent
'On love of female, 'mid mankind or herd.
'Woman to woman's beauty still is blind;
'Nor ewe delights in ewe, nor hind in hind.
Stanza xxxv. lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Naturale malum saltem et de more dedisset.
OVID.

And again,

Nec vaccam vaccæ nec equas amor urit equarum;
Urit oves aries, sequitur sua fœmina cervum.

. . . . . .

Fœmina fœmineo correpta cupidine nulla est.

'*'Tis only I, on earth, in air, or sea,*
'*Who suffer at thy hands such cruel pain;*
'*And this thou hast ordained, that I may be*
'*The first and last example in thy reign.*
'*Foully did Ninus' wife and impiously*
'*For her own son a passion entertain;*
'*Loved was Pasiphäe's bull and Myrrha's sire;*
'*But mine is madder than their worst desire.*

Stanza xxxvi.

'*Here female upon male had set her will;*
'*Had hope; and, as I hear, was satisfied.*
'*Pasiphäe the wooden cow did fill:*
'*Others, in other mode, their want supplied.*
'*But, had he flown to me,—with all his skill,*
'*Dan Dædalus had not the noose untied:*
'*For one too diligent hath wreathed these strings;*
'*Even Nature's self, the puissantest of things.*'

Stanza xxxvii.

Here again Ariosto is translating from Ovid.

... *Iphis loquitur.*

" taurum dilexit filia solis
" . . . . . tamen illa secuta est
" Spem Veneris, tamen illa dolis et imagine vaccæ
" Passa bovem est. . . . . .
. . . . . .
" Ipse, licet revolet ceratis Dædalus alis,
" Quid faciet? . . . . . .
. . . . . .
" . . . . at non vult natura, potentior omnibus istis."

7.

When to this city, near her sylvan haunt,
Young Flordespine invited Bradamant.
Stanza xxxix. lines 7 and 8.

Quando la donna invitò Bradamante
A questa *terra* sua poco distante.

Here what was before termed *castello*, is denominated *terra*.

8.

Love, with this hope, constructs his subtle tics;
Who other threads for me would vainly weave.
'Tis thus he took me, and explained the guise
In which I might the long-sought boon achieve.
Easy it were the damsel to surprise, &c.
Stanza l. lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Ariosto was in this place thinking of his own country mode of birding, in which it is common to take one fowl and use him as a decoy to others. Love takes Richardetto in his net, and instructs him (like a call-bird) how he is to take Flordespina. Another allusion to this practice I have explained in a former canto.

9.

A happy man was he who fastest hied
To tell my coming to the youthful QUEEN!
Stanza lii. lines 5 and 6.

Beato è chi correndo si conduce
Prima degli altri a la *regina!*

10.

know I am a nymph,
And have my dwelling in this crystal lymph, &c.
Stanza lxi. lines 7 and 8.

For this Ariosto, who fishes in all waters, is indebted to a fabliau in Barbasan's collection, which Hall Wharton has also woven into one of his tales.

11.

Feel, I am changed from woman into man.
Stanza lxiv. line 8.

The succeeding stanzas which I have omitted (we are assured by the brother of the poet) were condemned on that revision of his work which was made by him with a view to a more perfect edition; and this tends strongly to prove that Ariosto must have somewhat outrun the gross and licentious spirit of his age. English critics are disposed to believe that this was much more outrageous in Italy than in England, and the writer of an article upon my translation in the Quarterly Review attributes this to the supposed licentiousness which succeeded the great plague at Florence. Reasoning, however, as all our commentators do, from the great scandal afforded by Italian literature of this period, he overlooks *that* given by our own writers. Harrington's translation of the *Furioso*, dedicated to a virgin queen, is to the full as licentious as his original, and sometimes infinitely more coarse. As a proof of this, he has in the most scandalous episode which is contained in Ariosto's work used a word so offensive (not printed, indeed, for a blank space is left for it, but indicated by a corresponding double rhyme), that I question whether it would not almost scandalize even the male population of Wapping and St. Giles's. Nor will the plea of '*non meus hic sermo*' excuse our poets of that time: for original writers as well as translators may be cited in proof of English delinquency; and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*

presents as many voluptuous pictures as the prose of Boccaccio or the poetry of Ariosto.

12.

These she, since Ferrau took them, aye has stayed
Imprisoned in a dark and evil cell, &c.
Stanza lxxv. lines 1 and 2.

We read in the second book of the INNAMORATO, that Malagigi, who was accompanied by Vivian, conjured up a number of Demons to defend them against Ferrau and Rodomont; who however routed the devils, took the two brothers prisoners, and consigned them to the custody of Lanfusa the mother of Ferrau; whom Ariosto now represents as about to dispose of them to Bertolagi.

I am tempted to cite a reflection of Berni's which arises out of this adventure, because it may serve as a specimen of his humour.

. . . . . .

I own I would have fain beheld the attack:
So great is my desire to be acquainted
With those that wizard brought his cause to back:
That my own eyes might warrant, if (as painted)
The Devil be so very foul and black.
More; that his pictures differ, as to nail
And horn and hoof, and length and breadth of tail.

13.

" *Then wholly yours for life, in all things, rest.*"
Stanza xci. line 8.

Mr. Hoole observes (and I believe justly) that Ariosto was the first who introduced a letter into an epic poem; a circumstance in which he was afterwards imitated by Spenser. He

does not find fault with the insertion of the letter itself; but after citing a description of the means he took to write it,

" (E' salta dalle piume,
Si fà dar' carta, inchiostro, penna e lume),"

observes; 'literally, he leaps from his bed, and causes paper, ink, pens, and a light to be given him. These familiar passages (he adds) cannot well be rendered in our language,' &c.

In excuse for this indirect censure of Ariosto, we will cite a passage in Mr. Mackenzie's *Mirror*, who makes Captain Winterbottom pertinently enough observe—" Well, sister Juddy—and if *vitello* means veal in their lingo, what else would you have the poor devils call it?" The captain's observation may justify author and translator.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

Of mighty matters, sculptured in a font,
Does Malagigi to his comrades tell:
On them come Mandricardo and Rodomont,
And forthwith battle follows fierce and fell.
Discord goes scattering quarrel and affront
Amid the crew: but whither, forced by spell,
Fair Doralice upon her palfrey speeds,
The Tartar king, and Sarzan, turn their steeds.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVI.

I.

In former ages courteous ladies were,
Who worshipt virtue, and not worldly gear.
Women in this degenerate age are rare,
To whom aught else but sordid gain is dear:
But they who real goodness make their care,
Nor with the avaricious many steer,
In this frail life are worthy to be blest,
—Held glorious and immortal when at rest.

II.

Bradamant well would deathless praise inherit,
Who nor in wealth nor empire took delight;
But in Rogero's worth, excelling spirit,
In his unbounded gentlesse; and aright
For this did good Duke Aymon's daughter merit
To be beloved of such a valorous knight;
Who, what might be for miracles received,
In future ages, for her sake achieved.

III

He, with those two of Clermont, as whilere
To you I in the former canto said,
I say with Richardet and Aldigier,
Was gone, to give the prisoned brethren aid:
I told, as well how they a cavalier
Of haughty look approaching had surveyed,
Who bore that noble bird, by fiery birth
Renewed, and ever single upon earth.

IV.

When those three of that warrior were espied,
Poised on the wing, as if about to smite[1],
He fain by proof their prowess would have tried,
And if their semblance tallied with their might.
" Is there, among you, one," the stranger cried,
" Will prove upon me, which is best in fight,
" With lance or sword, till one to ground be cast,
" While in the sell his foe is seated fast?"

V.

" —I, at your choice," said Aldigier, " were fain
" To flourish faulchion, or to tilt with spear;
" But this with feat, which, if you here remain,
" Yourself may witness, so would interfere,
" That for the present parley time with pain
" Suffices, and yet less for the career.
" Six hundred men, or more, we here attend,
" With whom we must to-day in arms contend.

VI.

" Two of our own to rescue from their foes,
" And free from chains, us Love and Pity sway."
He to that stranger next the reason shows
Why thus in steel their bodies they array.
" So just is the excuse which you oppose,"
—He answered—" that I ill should this gainsay,
" And hold you surely for three cavaliers
" That seldom upon earth will find their peers.

VII.

" With you a lance or two I would have crost
" To prove how great your prowess in the field;
" But, since 'tis shown me at another's cost,
" Forego the joust, and to your reasons yield.
" Warmly I pray your leave against that host,
" To join with your good arms this helm and shield;
" And hope, if suffered of your band to be,
" No worthless comrade shall you find in me."

VIII.

Some one, meseems, may crave the stranger's name
Who thus the champions on their road delayed,
And so to partnership in arms laid claim
With those three warriors, for the strife arrayed:
She—style no more a man that martial dame—
Marphisa was; that on Zerbino laid
The task to bear about, against his will,
Ribald Gabrina, prone to every ill.

IX.

The two of Clermont and their bold compeer*
Gladly received her succour in their cause,
Whom certes they believed a cavalier,
And not a damsel, and not what she was.
A banner was espied by Aldigier
And shown the others, after little pause,
Which by the wavering wind was blown about,
And round about it ranged a numerous rout.

X.

And when, now nearer, the advancing crew
Were better marked in Moorish habit stoled,
For Saracens the stranger band they knew;
And they upon two sorry jades behold,
I' the middle of that troop, the prisoners, who
Were to the false Maganza to be sold.
Marphisa cries, "Why is the feast delayed,
"When lo! the guests are here, for whom we stayed?'

XI.

—"Not all:" Rogero said, "of the array
"Invited, lacks as yet a numerous part:
"A solemn festival is held to-day,
"And we, to grace it more, use every art:
"Yet they can now but little more delay."
While thus they parley, they from other part
Descry the treacherous Maganzese advance;
So all was ready to begin the dance.

* Rogero.

XII.

They of Maganza from one quarter steer,
And laden mules beneath their convoy go,
Bearing vest, gold, and other costly gear.
On the other side, mid faulchion, spear, and bow,
Approached the captive two with doleful cheer,
Who found themselves awaited by the foe;
And false and impious Bertolagi heard,
As with the Moorish captain he conferred.

XIII.

Nor Buovo's nor Duke Aymon's valiant son*
Can hold, when that false Maganzese they view;
Against him both with rested lances run:
He falls the victim of those furious two,
Through belly and through pummel pierced by one,
And by the other, in mid visage, through
His bleeding cheeks: may like disastrous fate
O'erwhelm all evil doers, soon or late!

XIV.

Marphisa with Rogero moved her horse
At this, nor waited other trumpet-strain;
Nor broke her lance in her impetuous course,
Till in succession three had prest the plain.
A mark well worthy fierce Rogero's force,
The paynim leader in a thought is slain;
And with him, pierced by the same weapon, go
Two others to the gloomy realms below.

* Aldigier and Richardetto.

XV.

'Twas hence a foul mistake the assaulted made;
It caused their utter loss, and ruined all:
They of Maganza deemed themselves betrayed
By the infidels, upon their leader's fall:
On the other side, so charged with hostile blade,
The Moors those Maganzese assassins call;
And, with fierce slaughter, either angry horde
'Gan bend the bow, and brandish lance and sword.

XVI.

Rogero, charging this, or the other band,
Slays ten or twenty, shifting his career;
No fewer by the warlike damsel's hand
Are slaughtered and extinguished, there and here:
As many men as feel the murderous brand
Are from the saddle seen to disappear:
Before it vanish cuirass, helms and shields
As the dry wood to fire in forest yields.

XVII.

If ever you remember to have viewed[2],
Or heard,—what time the wasps divided are,
And all the winged college is at feud,
Mustering their swarms for mischief in mid air,—
The greedy swallow swoop amid that brood,
To mangle and devour, and kill, and tear,
You must imagine so, on either part
The bold Rogero and Marphisa dart.

XVIII.

Not so Sir Richardet and Aldigier,
Varied the dance between those squadrons twain;
For, heedless of the Moors, each cavalier
Had but an eye to false Maganza's train.
The brother of Rinaldo, Charles's peer,
Much courage added to much might and main;
And these were now redoubled by the spite,
Which against false Maganza warmed the knight.

XIX.

This cause made him who in his fury shared,
Good Buovo's bastard, seem a lion fell;
He, without pause, each trusty helmet pared
With his good blade, or crushed it like the shell
Of brittle egg; and who would not have dared—
Would not have shown a Hector's worth as well,
Having two such companions in the stower,
Of warlike wights the very choice and flower?

XX.

Marphisa, waging all the while the fight,
On her companions often turned to gaze,
And as she marked their rivalry in might,
Admiring, upon all bestowed her praise;
But when she on Rogero fixed her sight,
Deemed him unparalleled; and in amaze,
At times believed *that* Paladin was Mars,
Who left his heaven to mix in mortal wars.

XXI.

She marvels at the champion's horrid blows;
She marvels how in vain they never fell.
The iron, smit by Balisarda shows
Like paper, not like stubborn plate and shell.
To pieces helm and solid corslet goes,
And men are severed, even to the sell;
Whom into equal parts those strokes divide,
Half dropt on this, and half on the other side.

XXII.

With the same downright stroke, he overbore
The horse and rider, bleeding in the dust;
The heads of others from their shoulders bore,
And parted from the hips the bleeding bust.
He often at a blow cleft five and more;
And—but I doubt who hears me might distrust
What of a seeming falsehood bears the impréss—
I would say more; but I parforce say less.

XXIII.

Good Turpin, he who knows that he tells true,
And leaves men to believe what they think right,
Says of Rogero wondrous things, which you
Hearing related, would as falsehoods slight.
Thus, with Marphisa matched, that hostile crew
Appears like ice, and she like burning light.
Nor her Rogero with less marvel eyes,
Than she had marked his valour with surprise.

XXIV.

As she had Mars in bold Rogero seen,
Perhaps Bellona he had deemed the maid,
If for a woman he had known that queen,
Who seemed the contrary, in arms arrayed;
And haply emulation had between
The pair ensued, by whom with cruel blade
Most deadly signs of prowess should be shown,
Mid that vile herd, on sinew, flesh, and bone.

XXV.

To rout each hostile squadron, filled with dread,
Sufficed the soul and valour of the four;
Nor better arms remained for them who fled
Than the sharp goads which on their heels they wore.
Happy was he with *courser* well bested!
By trot or amble they set little store;
And he who had no steed, here learned, dismayed,
How wretched is the poor foot-soldier's trade[3].

XXVI.

The conquerors' prize remained both field and prey;
Nor was there footman left nor muleteer;
The Moor took *this*, Maganza took *that* way;
One leaves the prisoners, and one leaves the gear.
With visage glad, and yet with heart more gay,
The four untied each captive cavalier;
Nor were less diligent to free from chains
The prisoned pages, and unload the wains.

XXVII

Besides good quantity of silver fine,
Wrought into different vessels, with a store
Of feminine array, of fair design,
Embroidered round about with choicest lore,
And suit of Flemish tapestry, framed to line
Royal apartments, wrought with silk and ore—
—They, 'mid more costly things in plenty spread—
Discovered flasks of wine, and meat and bread.

XXVIII.

When now the conquering troop their temples bare,
All see they have received a damsel's aid,
Known by her curling locks of golden hair,
And delicate and beauteous face displayed:
Her the knights honoured much, and to declare
Her name, so well deserving glory, prayed;
Nor she, that ever was of courteous mood
Among her friends, their instances withstood.

XXIX.

With viewing her they cannot sate their eyes,
Who in the battle such had her espied,
She speaks but with the Child, but him descries;
None prizes, values none, 'twould seem, beside.
Meanwhile 'that ready spread a banquet lies,'
To them is by the servants notified.
This they had served about a neighbouring fountain,
Screened from the sun by an o'ershadowing mountain.

XXX.

This spring was one of those four fountains rare,
Of those in France produced by Merlin's sleight;
Encompassed round about with marble fair,
Shining and polished, and than milk more white.
There in the stone choice figures chisseled were,
By that magician's godlike labour dight;
Save voice was wanting, these you might have thought
Were living and with nerve and spirit fraught.

XXXI.

Here, to appearance, from the forest prest
A cruel Beast and hideous to the eye,
With teeth of wolf, an ass's head and crest,
A carcass with long famine lean and dry,
And lion's claws; a fox in all the rest:
Which seemed to ravage France and Italy,
And Spain and England's desolated strands,
Europe and Asia, and in fine all lands[4].

XXXII.

That beast the low and those of proudest port
Had slain or maimed throughout this earthly ball;
Yea, fiercest seemed on those of noble sort,
Sovereign and satrap, prince and peer, to fall;
And made most havoc in the Roman court;
For it had slaughtered Pope and Cardinal:
Had filled St. Peter's beauteous seat with scathe,
And brought foul scandal on the Holy Faith.

XXXIII.

Whate'er she touches, wall or rampire steep,
Goes to the ground; where'er the monster wends,
Each fortress opens; neither castle-keep,
Nor city from her rage its wealth defends.
Honours divine as well that Beast would reap,
It seems (while the besotted rabble bends)
And claim withal, as to its keeping given,
The sacred keys which open Hell and Heaven.

XXXIV.

Approaching next, is seen a cavalier,
His temples circled with imperial bay;
Three youths with him in company appear,
With golden lilies wrought in their array:
A lion seems against that monster drear
To issue, with the same device as they:
The names of these are on the marble read,
Some on their skirt, some written overhead.

XXXV.

Of those who so against that Beast advance,
One to the hilt has in his life-blood dyed
His faulchion, Francis styled the first of France;
With Austrian Maximilian at his side:
In one, who gores his gullet with the lance,
The emperor Charles the fifth is signified:
Henry the eighth of England is he hight,
Who in the monster's breast a dart has pight.

XXXVI.

THE TENTH, in writing, on his back displayed
The Lion, who that Beast is seen to hold
By both his ears, and him so well has bayed,
That thither troop assistants manifold.
'Twould seem the world all fear aside has laid;
And, in amendment of their errors old,
Thitherward nobles troop, but these are few;
And so that hideous Beast those hunters slew.

XXXVII.

In wonder stood long time that warlike train,
Desirous, as the storied work they traced,
To know by hands of whom that Beast was slain,
Which had so many smiling lands defaced,
The names unknown to them, though figured plain
Upon the marble which that fountain cased:
They one another prayed, if any guessed
That story, he would tell it to the rest.

XXXVIII.

Vivian on Malagigi turned his eyes,
Who listening stood this while, yet spake he nought.
"With thee," he cried, "to tell the meaning lies,
"That shouldst by what I see in this be taught:
"Who are they, by whose darts and lances dies
"The hideous monster, that to bay is brought?'
—And Malagigi—"Hitherto their glory
"No author has consigned to living story.

XXXIX.

" The chiefs whose names are graved upon the stone,
" Not yet have moved upon this worldly stage;
" But will within seven hundred years be known,
" To the great honour of a future age.
" What time king Arthur filled the British throne,
" This fountain Merlin made, enchanter sage;
" Who things to come upon the marble fair
" Made sculpture by a cunning artist's care.

XL.

" This Beast, when weights and measures first were found,
" Came out of nether hell; when on the plain,
" Common before, men fixed the landmark's bound,
" And fashioned written pacts with jealous pain;
" Yet walked not every where, at first, her round:
" Unvisited she left yet many a reign:
" Through diverse places in our time she wends;
" But the vile rabble and the crowd offends.

XLI.

" From the beginning even to our day,
" Aye has that monster grown, and aye will grow;
" And till much time be past will grow alway:
" Was never mightier, nor worse cause of woe.
" That Python, oft the theme of ancient lay,
" So passing wonderful and fierce in show,
" Came not by half this loathsome monster nigh,
" In all its foulness and deformity.

XLII.

" Dread desolation shall it make; nor place
" Will unpolluted or untainted be;
" And you in the mysterious sculpture trace
" But little of its foul iniquity.
" The world, when weary of imploring grace,
" Those worthy peers (whose names you sculptured see,
" And which shall blazing carbuncle outshine),
" To succour in its utmost need combine.

XLIII.

" No one shall more that cruel beast molest
" Than Francis, who the realm of France will steer,
" Who justly shall be forward in this quest,
" Whom none shall go beyond, whom few shall peer
" Since he in splendour, as in all the rest,
" Wanting in worth, will many make appear
" Who whilom perfect seemed; so fade and yield
" All lesser glories to the sun revealed.

XLIV.

" In the first year of his successful reign,
" The crown yet ill secure upon his front,
" He threads the Alps, and makes their labour vain,
" Who would against his arms maintain the Mount.
" Impelled by generous and by just disdain,
" That unavenged as yet is that affront,
" Which a French army suffered from their rage,
" Who poured from beast-cote, field, and pasturage:

XLV.

" And thence shall into the rich Lombard plain
" Descend, with all the flower of France, and so
" Shall break the Switzer, that henceforth in vain
" Would he uplift his horn against the foe.
" To the sore scandal of the Church and Spain,
" And to the Florentine's much scathe and woe,
" By him that famous castle shall be quelled,
" Which inexpugnable whilere was held [5].

XLVI.

" In quelling it his honoured faulchion, more
" Than other arms, availing shall be found;
" Which first that cruel Beast to death will gore,
" The foul destroyer of each country round:
" Parforce will every standard fly before
" That conquering faulchion, or be cast to ground:
" Nor, stormed by it, will rampart, fosse, or wall,
" Secure the city, they surround, from fall.

XLVII.

" Imbued with every generous quality,
" Which can in great commander be combined,
" —Prudence like his who won Thrasymenæ
" And Trebbia's field, with Cæsar's daring mind,
" And Alexander's fortune, him I see;
" Without which all designs are mist and wind;
" Withal, so passing liberal, I in none
" Mark his example or his paragon."

XLVIII.

So Malagigi to his comrades said,
And moved in them desire some name to hear
Of others, who had laid that monster dead,
Which to slay *others* had been used whilere.
Among the first Bernardo's name was read[6],
Much vaunted in the writing of the Seer:
Who said, " Through him as known is Bibbiena
" As her own neighbour Florence and Siena.

XLIX.

" More forward in this chase shall no one show
" Than Sigismond, than Lewis, and than John;
" Each to that hideous beast a cruel foe;
" One a Gonzaga, one of Arragon,
" And one a Salviati[7]: with them go
" Francis Gonzaga and Frederick his son[8]:
" Brother and son-in-law, their aid afford;
" One chief Ferrara's, one Urbino's lord[9].

L.

" Of one of these the son, Sir Guidobald[10],
" Will not by sire, or other, distanced be:
" With Ottobon de Flisco, Sinibald[11]
" Chases the beast, both striving equally:
" Lewis de Gazolo[12] its neck has galled
" With one of those keen darts, Apollo's fee,
" Given with his bow, what time as well his glaive,
" The god of war, to gird that warrior, gave.

LI.

" Two Hercules and two Hippolyti [13]
" Of Este, a Hercules and Hippolyte
" Of the Gonzagas' and the Medici,
" Hunt and fatigue the monster in his flight:
" Nor Julian [14] lets his good son pass him by;
" Nor bold Ferrant [15] his brother; nor less wight
" Is Andrew Doria [16]; nor by any one
" Is Francis Sforza [17] in the chase outdone.

LII.

" Of good Avalo's glorious lineage bred [18],
" Two chiefs that mountain for their bearing show;
" Which, hiding him, from dragon-feet to head,
" The wicked Typhœus seems to keep below.
" 'Mid those combined, to lay the monster dead,
" Shall none more forward than this couple go:
" Him Francis of Pescara [19] names the text;
" Alphonso, hight of Guasto [20], is the next.

LIII.

" But where leave I Gonsalvo Ferrant [21], who
" Is held in such esteem, the pride of Spain?
" So praised by Malagigi, that him few
" Equal among the worthies of that train.
" William, surnamed of Monferrato [22], view
" 'Mid those that have the hideous monster slain:
" But these are few compared with numbers round,
" Whom that despiteous Beast shall kill or wound."

LIV.

To converse gay the friends themselves addrest,
And seemly pastimes, when their meal was done,
Through the hot noontide, and fine carpets prest,
'Mid shrubs, by which that limpid river run.
Vivian and Malagigi, that the rest
Might be more tranquil, watched with armour on;
When unaccompanied they saw a dame,
Who quickly towards their place of shelter came;

LV.

Hippalca she; from whom was torn away
Frontino, that good horse, by Rodomont:
Him had she long pursued the former day,
And now with prayer, now followed with affront.
Which booting nought, she had retraced her way,
To seek Rogero out in Agrismont;
And, how I know not, heard upon her round,
He here with Richardetto would be found.

LVI.

And, for to her well known was that repair,
Used by her often, she herself addrest
Towards the fount, and in that quarter fair
Found him, and in what manner, was exprest;
But like embassadress, who—wise and ware—
Better than was enjoined performs a hest,
When Richardetto she beheld, made show
As if she good Rogero did not know.

LVII.

She turned her wholly to Sir Richardet,
As bound direct to him; and, on his side,
He who well knew her, straight uprose and met,
And asked that damsel whitherward she hied.
Hippalca, with her eyes yet red and wet
From her long weeping, sighing deeply, cried,
But cried aloud, that young Rogero, near
The warrior she addrest, her tale might hear:

LVIII.

" I from Mount Alban with a courser sped;
" (So your good sister had commanded me)
" A horse much loved by her, and highly bred;
" Frontino is yclept that charger free;
" And him I more than thirty miles had led
" Towards Marseilles, where she designed to be
" Within few days; by her enjoined to wend
" Thither, and her arrival there attend.

LIX.

" I in the sure belief pursued my course,
" Was none so stout of heart, if I should say
" How Sir Rinaldo's sister owned the horse,
" He would presume to take that steed away.
" But vain was my design; for him parforce
" A Saracen took from me yesterday:
" Nor, when to him his master's name I read,
" Will that bold robber render back the steed.

LX.

" Him I to-day and all the day before
" Have prayed, and prayer and menace proving vain,
" Aye cursing him and execrating sore,
" Have left at little distance; where, with pain,
" Both to his courser and himself, the Moor,
" As best he can, a combat does maintain
" Against a knight, who him so hard has prest,
" I trust my injury shall be redrest."

LXI.

At this Rogero, leaping on his feet,
Who scarcely had endured the whole to hear,
To Richardetto turned; and, as a meet
Guerdon for his good deed, the cavalier
Did, with beseechings infinite, entreat
To let him singly with that damsel steer,
Until she showed the paynim, who by force
Had wrested from her hands that goodly horse.

LXII.

Richardet (though it seems discourtesy
To yield to other champion that emprize,
Which by himself should terminated be)
Yet with Rogero's earnest suit complies;
Who takes farewell of that good company,
And with the damsel on her journey hies.
And leaves those others, whom his feats confound,
Not merely lost in wonder, but astound.

LXIII.

To him Hippalca said, when she apart
Had drawn him to some distance from the rest,
'She was dispatched by her that in her heart
'Bore of his worth the image so imprest;
'—And added, without using farther art,
'All that her lady had to him addrest;
'And if she told another tale whilere,
'Of Richardetto she was then in fear.'

LXIV.

She added, 'how the author of that deed
'Had also said to her with mickle pride;
"Because I know Rogero owns the steed,
"More willingly I take him from his guide.
"If he would repossess the courser, read
"To him what I have no desire to hide,
"I am *that* Rodomont, whose martial worth
"Scatters its splendour through this ample earth."

LXV.

Listening, the visage of the youthful knight
Showed with what rage his heart was in a flame,
As well as that the horse was his delight;
As well upon account of whence it came;
And also that 't was reft in his despite;
He sees dishonour will ensue and blame,
Save he from Rodomont redeem the prey,
And with a due revenge that wrong repay.

LXVI.

With him, without repose, the damsel rides,
Who with his foe would bring him front to front;
And thither journies where the road divides,
And one branch cuts the plain, one climbs the mount,
And either pathway to that valley guides,
Where she had newly left King Rodomont.
The mountain track was short, but trod with pain;
That other longer far, but smooth and plain.

LXVII.

Hippalca's ardour to retrieve the prey,
And upon Rodomont avenge the wrong,
Incites that maid the mountain to assay;
By which (as said) the journey was less long:
While Mandricardo, Rodomont, and they
Of whom I erst made mention in my song,
That easier track across the level hold;
And thus encounter not Rogero bold.

LXVIII.

Until King Agramant shall succoured be,
Suspended is their quarrel (in what wise
You know), and in the champions' company
Doralice, cause of all their discord, hies.
Now hear the upshot of this history!
Their way directly by that fountain lies,
Beside whose margin are in pastime met
Marphisa and Aldigier and Richardet.

LXIX.

Marphisa had, at her companions' prayer,
Cloathed her in female ornaments and vest,
Of those, which by Maganza's traitour were
Late to Lanfusa, in full trust, addrest;
And, though the appearance of that maid was rare
Without her corslet, casque and all the rest,
—At their entreaty, these for once laid down—
She deigned to seem a maid and donned the gown.

LXX.

As soon as Mandricardo saw her face,
In trust that, could he win her in affray,
He would that maid, in recompense and place
Of Doralice, to Rodomont convey;
As if Love trafficked in such contracts base,
And lover could his lady change away,
Nor yet with reason at the event be pained,
If he in losing one another gained.

LXXI.

Hence with a damsel to provide the peer,
That he himself the other may retain;
Deeming her worthy any cavalier,
He would by force of arms the maid obtain;
And, as if he could suddenly hold dear
This maid as *that*, on him bestow the gain;
And all of those, whom he about her spied,
Forthwith to joust and single fight defied.

LXXII.

Vivian and Malagigi (who were dight
In arms, as guard and surety for the rest,)
One and the other champion—prompt for fight,
Rose lightly from the herbage which they prest,
Deeming they had to joust with either knight;
But Rodomont, who came not on this quest,
No motion made as he a course would run;
So that they had to tourney but with one.

LXXIII.

Sir Vivian is the first who moves his horse,
With mighty heart, and lays his weapon low;
And he, that Tartar king, renowned for force,
With greater puissance meets the coming foe.
His lance each warrior levels in the course
Where he bests trusts to plant the furious blow.
Vainly Sir Vivian's spear the casque offends;
Nor throws that paynim knight, nor even bends.

LXXIV.

That Tartar's harder weapon makes the shield
Of Vivian, at their onset, fly like glass;
And, tumbling from his saddle on the field,
Extends the champion amid flowers and grass.
To run his chance Sir Malagigi, steeled,
Did to his brother's succour quickly pass;
But (such that warrior's hurry to be near)
Rather accompanied, than venged the peer.

LXXV.

The other of those brethren armed before
His cousin, and had backed his courser wight;
And, having first defied, encountered sore,
Spurring with flowing rein, the stranger knight.
Against the tempered helm that pagan wore
Sounded the blow, an inch below the sight:
Heaven-high the truncheon flew, in fragments broke,
But the stout pagan winced not for the stroke.

LXXVI.

Him on the left side smote that paynim peer,
And (for the blow was with huge force designed)
Little his shield, and less his iron gear,
Availed, which opened like the yielding rhind:
The weapon pierced his shoulder; Aldigier
Now right now left upon his horse inclined;
Then him, 'mid grass and flowers, his comrades view,
With arms of crimson, face of pallid, hue.

LXXVII.

Next Richardetto comes, and for the blow
Intended, levels such a mighty lance,
He showed himself, as he was wont to show,
Worthy to be a paladin of France;
And had stamped signs of this upon the foe,
If he had warred on him with equal chance;
But prostrate rolled, encumbered by his steed;
Nor fell the courser through his lord's misdeed.

LXXVIII.

When knight appeared not on the other side,
Who should in joust the paynim king affront,
He thought the damsel was his prize, and hied
Thither, where she was seated by the fount.
And—" Lady, you are mine," the Tartar cried,
" Save other champion in your succour mount;
" Nor can you make denial or excuse,
" Since such the right of war and common use."

LXXIX.

Marphisa raised her face with haughty cheer,
And answered him; " Thy judgment wanders far;
" I will concede thy sentence would be clear,
" Concluding I am thine by right of war,
" If either were my lord or cavalier
" Of those, by thee unhorsed in bloody jar:
" Nor theirs am I, nor other's, but my own.
" Who wins me, wins me from myself alone.

LXXX.

" I too with lance and sword do doughty deed,
" And more than one good knight on earth have laid.
" —Give me," she cried, " my armour and my steed."
And readily her squires that hest obeyed:
Then in her waistcoat stood, of flowing weed
Despoiled, with well-knit form and charms displayed;
And in all points (such strength she shewed and grace)
Resembled heavenly Mars, except her face.

LXXXI.

The damsel donned her sword, when armed all o'er,
And on her courser leapt with nimble spring;
And, right and left, she made him, thrice or more
Poised on his haunches, turn in narrow ring.
And, levelling the sturdy lance she bore,
Defied, and next assailed, the Tartar king.
So combating with Peleus' son, of yore,
Penthiselæa warred on Trojan shore.

LXXXII.

Like brittle crystal, in that proud career,
The weapons at the rest to pieces went;
Yet neither of those warriors, 't would appear,
Backwards one inch at their encounter bent.
Marphisa, who would willingly be clear
What of a closer fight would be the event,
For a new combat with the paynim lord,
Wheeled, to attack that warrior with the sword.

LXXXIII.

That Tartar cursed the elements and sky,
When her he saw remaining in her sell;
And she, who thought to make his buckler fly,
Cursed heaven as loudly as that infidel.
Already were their faulchions raised on high,
Which on the enchanted arms like hammers fell:
Enchanted arms both combatants enclose,
Never more needed by those deadly foes.

LXXXIV.

So perfect are the champions' plate and chain,
They thrust or cut of spear or faulchion stay;
So that the two the battle might maintain,
Throughout this and throughout another day:
But Rodomont leaps in between the twain,
And taxes Mandricardo with delay;
Crying, " If battle here is to be done,
" Finish we that which we to-day begun.

LXXXV.

" We made a truce, thou knowest, upon pact
" Of furnishing our baffled forces aid;
" Nor foe in joust or fight can be attacked
" By us with justice till this debt be paid."
Then to Marphisa he in reverent act
Addressed himself, and of that courier said;
And next recounted to the martial dame,
How seeking aid for Agramant he came.

LXXXVI.

Next prays ' not only with that Tartar knight
' She will abandon or defer the fray;
' But that, Troyano's valiant son to right,
' She will, together with them, wend her way;
' By which her warlike fame a higher flight,
' More easily may, even to heaven, assay,
' Than in a quarrel of such paltry guise,
' Which offers hindrance to such fair emprize.'

LXXXVII.

Marphisa, who had evermore in thought
To prove the paladins of Charles, and who
To France was over land and ocean brought,
From clime so distant, with no other view,
Than by her own experience to be taught
If their far-spread renown were false or true,
Resolved together with the troop to speed,
As soon as she had heard their monarch's need.

LXXXVIII.

Meanwhile Rogero, with that guiding may,
Had vainly by the rugged pathway sped;
Who that king Rodomont another way
Had taken, when he reached the mountain, read;
And thinking, that he was not far away,
And the road straight towards that fountain led,
Trotting in haste behind the Sarzan hied,
Where he new prints upon the path espied.

LXXXIX.

'Hippalca he to Mont Albano,' prayed,
'To wend, which distant one day's journey lies;
'Because to seek anew that fountain-glade,
'Would be to wander in too wide a guise.
'And that she need not doubt withal,' he said,
'But that he would retrieve the ravished prize.
'And, were she in Mount Alban—or where'er—
'Vowed she the tidings speedily should hear.'

XC.

And gave the letter to that maid to bear,
Which, writ by him, he in his bosom wore,
And added many matters, with the prayer,
'She would excuse him by her friendly lore.'
Hippalca in her memory fixt, with care,
The whole; took leave, and turned her horse once more:
Nor ceased that faithful messenger to ride
Till she Mount Alban reached at evening-tide.

XCI.

Rogero followed fast the paynim knight,
Tracked o'er the level by those footsteps new,
But overtook him not, till he got sight,
Beside the fount, of Mandricardo too.
Already either had his promise plight,
He nought unknown to his compeer would do,
Till they had succour to that host conveyed,
On which King Charles his yoke had nearly laid.

XCII.

Arrived, Rogero knew Frontino gay,
And, through that courser, knew the knight astride;
And on his lance with bending shoulders lay,
And in fierce tone the African defied.
Job was outdone by Rodomont that day,
In that the king subdued his haughty pride,
And the fell fight which he had ever used
To seek with every instance, he refused.

XCIII.

The first day this and last, that e'er in fight
King Rodomont refused his part to bear!
But his desire appeared to him so right,
In succour of his sovereign to repair;
That if he had believed he clutched the knight
Faster than nimble leopard gripes the hare,
He not so far his purpose would forego,
As on his prey to waste a passing blow.

XCIV.

Add, that he knows Rogero is the peer
Who him for good Frontino now assails;
—So famous, that no other cavalier
Like him such eminence of glory scales;
—The man, of whom he gladly would be clear,
By proof, how much in battle he avails:
Yet shuns the combat, proffered on his part;
So much his monarch's siege has he at heart.

XCV.

Three hundred miles, a thousand, would he ride,
—Were it not so—to purchase such affray;
But he, if him Achilles had defied,
Had done no otherwise than as I say;
So deeply did the covering ashes hide
That fire beneath, whose fury stifled lay:
He told, 'why he refused the strife;' and prayed,
'As well Rogero the design to aid.'

XCVI.

Adding, ' that he, in doing so, would do
' What to his lord a faithful vassal owes;
' Still, when the siege was raised, might they renew
' And terminate their deadly strife by blows.'
To him Rogero cried, " The fight with you
" I freely will defer, till from his foes
" King Agramant be rescued by the sword;
" Provided first Frontino be restored.

XCVII.

" Would you that I delay to prove by deed,
" That you have acted in unworthy sort,
" —Nor did, like valiant man, to take my steed
" Thus from a woman—till we meet at court,
" Render me my Frontino back, or read,
" Upon no other ground, will I support
" That battle shall not be between us two;
" Nor will accord an hour of truce to you."

XCVIII.

While of that African he so demands
Frontino, or him threats with instant fray;
And either still the other's claim withstands,
Nor *this* the steed will grant, nor *that* delay;
King Mandricardo stirs, on the other hand,
Another strife; who sees that ensign gay
Rogero on his shield was wont to wear,
The bird which reigns o'er other fowls of air.

XCIX.

He bore on azure field that eagle white,
The beauteous ensign of the Trojan throng:
Such glorious bearing showed that youthful knight,
Because he drew his line from Hector strong.
But Mandricardo knew not of this right,
Nor would endure—and deemed a crying wrong,
That any other but himself should wield
Famed Hector's argent eagle on his shield.

C.

King Mandricardo in like blazon wore
The bird of Ide, which bore off Ganymede:
How in the castle perilous of yore,
He gained that noble ensign for his meed,
—That enterprize I ween, with matter more,
You bear in mind, and how, for his good deed,
The fairy gave it him with all the gear,
Erst given by Vulcan to the Trojan peer.

CI.

The Tartar and Rogero had before
Engaged in battle, only on this quest,
Divided by what accident, my lore
Recites not, as already manifest:
Nor had till now those knights encountered more:
When Mandricardo sees that bird imprest
On the Child's shield, he shouts with threatening cry
To young Rogero; "Take my proud defy!"

CII.

" Audacious man, mine ensign do'st thou wear,
" Nor this to-day for the first time, is said;
" And think'st thou, madman, I will thee forbear,
" Because for once to spare thee I was led?
" But since nor menace nor yet counsel are
" Of force to drive this folly from thy head,
" It shall appear how much it had been best
" For thee forthwith to have obeyed my hest."

CIII.

As fire, whereon dry, heated wood is strown,
Roused by a little puff, at once ascends,
So burns Rogero's wrath, to fury blown,
By the first word with which that king offends.
" Thou thinkest," he exclaims, " to bear me down,
" Because this knight as well with me contends:
" But learn that I can win in fighting field
" From him the horse, from thee good Hector's shield.

CIV.

" Yet once before—nor is it long ago—
" Twixt us in battle was this question tried:
" But I that day restrained the murderous blow[23],
" Because thou hadst no faulchion at thy side.
" *These* shall be deeds, *that* strife was but a show;
" And ill this argent bird shall thee betide;
" This is the ancient bearing of my line;
" 'Tis thou usurpest what by right is mine."

CV.

—" Say rather, thou usurpest mine from me;"
Cried Mandricardo; and that faulchion drew,
Which lately, underneath the greenwood tree,
Orlando from his hand in fury threw.
The Child, who could not aught but courteous be,
(Such was his gentle nature) at the view
Of Mandricardo, with his faulchion drawn,
Let fall his ready lance upon the lawn;

CVI.

And at the same time, strained his goodly sword;
And better braced the covering shield he wore:
But 'twixt those combatants leapt Argier's lord,
And quick Marphisa spurred the pair before;
And one *this* foe, the other *that* implored,
And both besought, that they would strive no more.
King Rodomont complains, ' the Tartar knight
' Has violated twice the compact plight.

CVII.

' First, in belief he should Marphisa gain,
' He more than once had jousted for that fair;
' Now to bear off Rogero's ensign fain,
' He for king Agramant shows little care.'
—" If thus" (said Rodomont) "you faith maintain,
" To finish our own combat better were,
" A cause of strife more fitting and more due
" Than either of the pleas maintained by you.

CVIII.

" On this condition was the treaty plight,
" And the accord between us now in force;
" When I with thee shall have performed the fight,
" I next shall answer him about the horse:
" You then with him, if you survive, your right
" Shall to the shield maintain in warlike course.
" But I such work shall give you, I conceive,
" As will small labour for Rogero leave."

CIX.

—" The bargain which thou hopest thou shalt not have,"
(King Mandricardo answered Rodomont)
" I will accord thee more than thou do'st crave,
" And trust to make thee sweat from feet to front.
" And to bestow on others, much shall save,
" As water never fails in plenteous font;
" And for Rogero and a thousand more,
" And all the world beside reserve a store."

CX.

Their fury waxed, and angrier words ensued,
Now upon *this* and now upon *that* side.
With Rodomont and with the Child at feud,
Fierce Mandricardo both at once defied.
Rogero, not endowed with suffering mood,
Would hear no more of peace, but vengeance cried.
Now *here* Murphisa hurried, and now *there*,
But could not singly such an ill repair.

CXI.

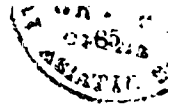
As peasant, when a river saps its mounds,
And seeking vent the oozing waters drop,
Hastening to shut the stream within its bounds,
And save his pastures and expected crop,
Dams right and left; yet him the stream confounds:
For, if he *here* the sinking ruin prop,
There he beholds the rotten dyke give out,
And from thick seams the restless water spout,

CXII.

So, while the Tartar and Rogero rage,
And Rodomont, in hurly-burly fray,
For each of these would fiercest battle wage,
And would outgo his feers in that assay,
Marphisa seeks their fury to assuage,
And strives, and time and trouble throws away;
For as she makes one knight from strife retire,
She sees the others re-engage with ire.

CXIII.

Marphisa, to appease the warriors bent,
Exclaimed, " Sirs, listen to my better lore;
" A good remembrance 'tis, all argument
" To leave until we Agramant restore.
" If each is on his own design intent,
" With Mandricardo will I strive once more;
" And fain would see, according to his word,
" If he can conquer me with spear and sword.



CXIV.

" But if, to aid our sovereign, duty call,
" Him let us aid, nor civil discord breed."
—" To ground, through me, such project shall not fall,"
Rogero said, " so *he* restore my steed.
" Let him resign that horse, or—once for all,
" I say again—to his defence take heed.
" I either here my parting breath will yield,
" Or on my courser will return afield."

CXV.

—" 'Twere not so easy to obtain this quest
" As 'twere that other," Rodomont replied;
And thus pursued; " I unto thee protest,
" If any evil shall our king betide,
" Thine is the fault not mine; for I am prest
" To do whate'er is fitting, on my side."
Small heed to that protest Rogero paid,
And stung by fury, griped his trenchant blade.

CXVI.

On Argier's king he sprang, like salvage boar,
Encountering him with shoulder and with shield;
And him disordered and distrest so sore,
That with one stirrup's loss, the monarch reeled.
—" Rogero," Mandricardo cried, " give o'er,
" Or else with me divide the battle-field;"
And struck, this said, with worse than felon spite,
Upon the morion of that youthful knight.

CXVII.

Even to his courser's neck Rogero bends;
Nor, when he would, himself anew can rear;
Because the sword of Ulien's son* descends
As well upon the youthful cavalier;
And, but that adamant his face defends,
Across the cheeks his tempered helm would sheer.
The Child, in anguish, opens either hand;
And this the bridle drops and that the brand.

CXVIII.

Him o'er the field his courser bears away;
On earth the faulchion lies, which he let go:
Marphisa (with Rogero through that day,
Comrade in arms) appeared like fire to glow,
Enraged, that two one knight should overlay;
And, as magnanimous and stout, for foe
Singled King Mandricardo out, and sped,
With all her might, a stroke upon his head.

CXIX.

Rodomont o'er the plain pursues his man.
—Another stroke, and he has lost the horse!
But Richardetto drives, and Vivian,
Between the Child and paynim in that course.
This warrior at the king of Argier ran,
And from Rogero severed him by force;
That (it was Vivian) in Rogero's hand,
Now from the blow recovered, placed his brand.

* Rodomont.

CXX.

As soon as to himself the Child returns,
And is by Vivian armed with sword again,
To venge the injury that stripling burns,
And runs at Rodomont with flowing rein,
Like lion, whom a bull upon his horns
Has lifted, though he feels this while no pain,
So him his heat of blood, disdain, and ire,
To venge that cruel outrage goad and fire.

CXXI.

Rogero storms upon the paynim's crest;
And, could that knight recover his own brand,
Which by foul felony (as erst exprest)
Was ravished from the youthful warrior's hand,
I well believe that the descending pest
Rodomont's iron casque would ill withstand;
That casque which Babel's king bade forge, who sought
To war on Heaven in his presumptuous thought.

CXXII.

Discord, believing nothing could ensue
But stir, and strife, and combat on that head;
And that there was no place, amid the crew,
For truce or treaty, to her sister said,
'That she, her well-beloved monks to view,
'Might now again with her securely tread.'
Let them depart; and mark we where in front
Rogero has sore wounded Rodomont.

CXXIII.

Rogero's blow was levelled with such spite,
That this upon Frontino's crupper made
The helmet and the shell of iron smite,
In which that Saracen his limbs arrayed;
And he, three times or four, to left and right,
—As if about to fall—head-foremost, swayed;
And would have lost withal his trusty brand,
But that the hilt was fastened to his hand.

CXXIV.

Marphisa has king Mandricardo prest
Meanwhile, and makes him sweat breast, front, and face;
And he Marphisa has as sore distrest:
But such good plates each valiant bosom case,
Impassable is either iron vest;
And both have hitherto maintained their place.
But, at a turn her martial courser made,
Marphisa needed young Rogero's aid.

CXXV.

Marphisa's martial steed, in turning short,
Where a firm footing that soft mead denied,
On the moist surface slipt, and in such sort,
That he fell, helpless, on his better side;
And, as he rose in haste and lacked support,
Athwart by furious Brigliador was plied;
On which the paynim, little courteous, came;
So that he fell anew beneath the dame.

CXXVI.

Rogero, when Marphisa on the ground
He saw unhorsed, deferred no more his aid;
Who for that deed had leisure; since, astound,
Rodomont far away had been conveyed:
He smote the morion which that Tartar crowned;
And, cleft like stalk, his head on earth had laid,
Had he his trusty Balisarda born,
Or Mandricardo other helmet worn.

CXXVII.

Rodomont, of his senses repossest,
Turned round this while, and Richardetto spied;
And recollecting how, when late distrest,
He to Rogero succour had supplied,
Quickly against that youthful warrior prest;
Who an ill guerdon would from him abide,
Did Malagigi not his malice thwart
With other magic and with mickle art.

CXXVIII.

Sage Malagigi versed in every sleight
Which by the wisest wizard can be done;
Although his book he has not, by whose might,
He in his course can stop the passing sun;
The conjuration recollects and rite,
By which he tames the rebel fiends; and one
Bids enter into Doralice's steed,
Whom he to fury stings and headlong speed.

CXXIX.

Into that gentle palfrey's form, who bore
The beauteous daughter of King Stordilane,
Sir Vivian's brother, simply by his lore,
Made pass an angel of the dark domain;
And the good horse, who never moved before,
Except in due obedience to the rein,
Now took a leap, possest by that ill sprite,
Thirty feet long and sixteen feet in height.

CXXX.

It was a mighty leap, yet not so wide
As to make any rider void the sell[24].
Seeing herself so high in air, loud cried,
(Yielding herself for dead) that bonnibel.
Her palfrey, with the Dæmon for his guide,
After his leap, runs, goaded by the spell
(The maid still screaming) such a furious course,
An arrow had not reached the flying horse.

CXXXI.

At the first hearing of that voice, the son
Of Ulien, on his part, the strife suspended;
And thither, where the furious palfrey run,
Swiftly in succour of the lady wended.
No less was by the Tartar monarch done;
Who neither Child nor damsel more offended;
But without craving time, or truce, or peace,
Pursued King Rodomont and Doralice.

CXXXII.

Marphisa rose meanwhile, to fury stirred;
And, with disdain all over in a glow,
Thought to accomplish her revenge, and erred:
For at too great a distance was the foe.
Rogero, who beheld the war deferred,
Rather like lion roared than sighed: well know
Those two their coursers they should vainly gore,
Following Frontino and good Brigliador.

CXXXIII.

Rogero will not halt till he renew
And end the unfinished combat for the horse;
Marphisa will not quit that Tartar, who
Will to her satisfaction prove his force.
To leave their quarrel in such guise the two
Esteem foul scandal; as their better course,
In chase of those offending knights to fare,
Is the conclusion of that valiant pair.

CXXXIV.

They in the paynim camp will find each foe,
If them before they find not on their way;
Whom thither bound, to raise the siege they know,
Ere Charlemagne bring all beneath his sway.
So thitherward the twain directly go
Where these, they deem, will be their certain prey.
Yet not so rudely thence Rogero broke,
But that he first with his companions spoke.

CXXXV.

Thither returns Rogero, where apart
Is he, the brother of his lady fair;
And vows himself his friend, with generous heart,
In good or evil fortune, everywhere.
Him he implores—and frames his speech with art—
'He his salutes will to his sister bear;'
And this so well; he moves by that request
No doubt in him, nor any of the rest.

CXXXVI.

Of Malagigi he and Viviane
Next takes farewell and wounded Aldigier;
Their services no less that kindly twain
Proffer, as ever debtors to the peer.
Marphisa to seek Paris is so fain,
That parting she forgets her friends to cheer;
But Malagigi and Vivian, in pursuit,
Follow, and from afar that maid salute;

CXXXVII.

And so Sir Richardet as well: but low
On earth lies Aldigier, and there must rest.
The two first champions* towards Paris go,
And the two others† next pursue that quest.
In other canto, Sir, I hope to show
Of wondrous and of superhuman gest,
Wrought to the damage of the christian king,
By those two couples of whose worth I sing.

* Mandricardo and Rodomont. † Rogero and Marphisa.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVI.

1.

When those three of that warrior were espied,
Poised on the wing, as if about to smite, &c.
Stanza iv. lines 1 and 2.

A metaphor taken from falconry, and allusive to the attitude of the hawk when preparing to pounce.

2.

If ever you remember to have viewed, &c.
Stanza xvii. line 1.

Sin autem ad pugnam exierint (nam sæpe duobus
Regibus incessit magno Discordia motu)
Tum manibus Progne pectus signata cruentis
Et Meropes late vastant, ipsasque volantes
Ore ferunt, dulcem nidis immitibus escam.
VIRGIL.

3.

And he who had no horse, here learned, dismayed,
How wretched is the poor foot-soldier's trade.
Stanza xxv. lines 7 and 8.

With the single exception of the English, such was the condition of the European foot, ill-armed, and conscribed from the poor and opprest peasantry of all other countries. Our own, the conquerors at Cressy and at Agincourt, were recruited from

our yeomanry, and, as is well known, practised in the use of the bow, a cheap but powerful weapon, and admirably suited to the powers of those who were to employ it.

4.

Here, to appearance, from the forest prest
A cruel Beast and hideous to the eye,
With teeth of wolf, an ass's head and crest,
A carcass with long famine lean and dry,
And lion's claws; a fox in all the rest:
Which seemed to ravage France and Italy,
And Spain and England's desolated strands,
Europe and Asia, and in fine all lands.

Stanza xxxi.

All the commentators have explained this monster to mean Avarice, which had over-run all the christian world. Sir John Harington, who lived in an age of allegory, says, that Ariosto describes this vice very significantly; he makes "her ugly, because of all vices it is most hateful; ears of an ass, being for the most part ignorant, or at least careless of other men's good opinions; a wolf in head and breast, namely, ravenous and never satisfied; a lion's grisly jaw, terrible and devouring; a fox in all the rest, wily and crafty." See notes to Sir John Harington's translation of the Furioso.

He might have brought other proofs in support of his opinion, as the scandal which the Beast had brought upon the papal court, and as arrogating to itself the keys of Heaven, &c. in which Ariosto (who, as has been said, though a catholic was no papist) manifestly satirizes the sale of indulgences. To this it may be observed, that many of the hunters seem only to be remarkable for their notable liberality.

On the other hand, one simple explanation of the figure will no more satisfactorily illustrate this typical monster, than one simple explanation would unriddle the Beast in the Revelations, or those in the *Inferno*, whose significations the Signor Rossetti has so ingeniously interpreted. (Of which Dante says;

E una lupa, che di tutta brame,
Scontra, carca con la sua magrezza,
E molte genti fè gia viver grame, &c.
Inferno, Canto I.

—— Inflamed with every fierce desire,
A famished she-wolf like a spectre came,
Beneath whose gripe shall many a wretch expire.
HAYLEY.)

Thus in the stanzas in which figure Leo the tenth, Charles the fifth, Francis the first, and our Henry the eighth (in which there is apparently an allusion to the work which procured Henry the title of Defender of the Faith), it is difficult to believe that *heresy* is not designated. Perhaps indeed Ariosto may mean to signify that the heresy of the reformation arose out of avarice; inasmuch as Lutheranism sprang out of disputes respecting the sale of the gifts of the church.

Che de le spine talor nascon le rose
E d'una fetida erba nasce il giglio.

For sometimes on the thorn will roses blow,
And from a fetid root the lily grow.

5.

By him that famous castle shall be quelled,
Which inexpugnable whilere was held.
Stanza xlv. lines 7 and 8.

The citadel of Milan, as we are told.

6.

Among the first Bernardo's name was read.
Stanza xlviii. line 5.

This Bernardo was a cardinal, and author of the comedy called *Calandra*. Though not born at Bibbiena, a town of Tuscany, he derived his name from this city which he had long

inhabited, and was styled *il Bibbiena*. His paternal name was Divizio. His designation is well known to those conversant with Italian literature.

7.

More forward in this chase shall no one show
Than Sigismond, than Lewis, and than John;
Each to that hideous beast a cruel foe;
One a Gonzaga, one of Arragon,
And one a Salviati.

Stanza xlix. lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Three distinguished cardinals, Sigismondo Gonzaga, Giovanni Salviati, and Lewis of Arragon.

8.

Francis Gonzaga and Frederick his son.

Stanza xlix. line 6.

Francis Gonzaga was second of the name, and fourth of the series of Marquises of Mantua. He was much distinguished by his warlike accomplishments as captain of the Venetians, and had a yet better title to respect for the fidelity with which he adhered to his engagements with that people. His son Frederick was also a distinguished leader, and captain general of the Roman church and of the Florentine republic. It has been said that this man and all, who are cited by the poet as hunters of the beast, had the character of liberality.

9.

Brother and son-in-law, their aid afford;
One chief Ferrara's, one Urbino's lord.

Stanza xlix. lines 7 and 8.

The brother-in-law of Francesco Gonzaga was Alphonso of Este, duke of Ferrara. The son-in-law, who was duke of Urbino, was Francesco Maria della rovere, nephew of Pope Julius the second, who procured him his wife and his dukedom.

10.

Sir Guidobald.

Stanza l. line 1.

Guidobaldo the second, afterwards duke of Urbino, son of Francesco Maria.

11.

With Ottobon de Flisco, Sinibald.

Stanza l. line 3.

Of these names were two noble youths, brothers of the family of Flischi at Genoa, of whom Ottobon was an ecclesiastic. These retired into voluntary exile, that they might not draw a war upon their country by a private enmity which they had incurred. There were likewise two pontiffs of the same surname: one was Innocent IV. first called Sinibaldo of Genoa, and the other, Adrian V. before called Ottobon, nephew of Pope Innocent IV. created cardinal by his uncle. He was a man of great ability and application, but lived only forty days after he came to the papal chair.

12.

Lewis Gazolo.

Stanza l. line 5.

Luigi Gonzaga, surnamed Rodomont for his valour, was the son of Ludovico Gonzaga, and called Gazalo from a castle which he held. This person is further spoken of in the succeeding notes.

13.

Two Hercules and two Hippolyti.

Stanza li. line 1.

One Hippolytus the cardinal to whom the poet dedicates his

book; the other, son of Alphonso duke of Ferrara, likewise a cardinal. The Hercules were, Hercules Gonzaga, the father of Alphonso duke of Ferrara, and Hercules Gonzaga, cardinal of Mantua. The last Hippolytus was of the family of Medicis, and a cardinal; who died by poison, much lamented for his many virtues.

14.

Nor Julian.

Stanza li. line 5.

The brother of Lorenzo of Medicis who lost his life by assassination. His son was Pope Clement VII. born a few days after his father's death.

15.

Nor bold Ferrant.

Stanza li. line 6.

Brother to the duke of Mantua, at one time viceroy of the island of Sicily, and afterwards lieutenant of the duchy of Milan, and general of the imperial army.

16.

Is Andrew Doria.

Stanza li. line 7.

The famous Andrew Doria of Genoa.

17.

Is Francis Sforza.

Stanza li. line 8.

The second Francesco Sforza, son of Ludovico il Moro, who obtained the duchy of Milan.

18.

Of good Avalo's glorious lineage bred.

Stanza lii. line 1.

This noble family of the Avali came from Spain, and were of great repute and antiquity.

19.

Francis of Pescara.

Stanza lii. line 7.

Marquis of Pescara, and son of Alphonso. He was a great commander, and prosperous in every undertaking except at Ravenna, where he was taken prisoner after receiving many wounds. To the study of arms he joined the embellishment of letters; and while prisoner with the French, addressed to his wife Vittoria an elegant dialogue on love. He died in the flower of his age.

20.

Alphonso, hight of Guasto.

Stanza lii. line 8.

By the Italians *Vasto*, cousin to the before-named Francesco, and no less an ornament to the house of Avali.

21.

Gonsalvo Ferrant

Stanza liii. line 1.

Was born at Cordova in Andalusia, of an ancient and noble family. By his assistance Ferdinand conquered the city of Granada and the kingdom of Naples. He gained the title of Great, and at last died of a fever in the 72d year of his age, in the year 1515.

22.

William, surnamed of Monferrato.

Stanza liii. line 5.

William the third marquis of Monferrato, who was rich in every accomplishment of mind and body, and who also died in the flower of his age.

These notices of Italian families are taken, with some corrections, from Hoole, who abridges from Fornari.

23.

But I that day restrained the murderous blow,
Because thou hadst no faulchion at thy side.

Stanza civ. lines 3 and 4.

Rogero practises this art of forbearance in the INNAMORATO. See Book III.

24.

It was a mighty leap, yet not so wide
As to make any rider void the sell.

Stanza cxxx. lines 1 and 2.

It must be recollected that women rode astride, and that the saddles, formerly in use, with a high elevation before and behind, secured the rider as in a box.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVII.

43552

ARGUMENT.

By good Rogero and those paynims three
Defeated, Charlemagne to Paris flies.
Already all, throughout their chivalry,
Are mad with spite and hatred; jars arise,
And strife; and means to still their enmity
Their sovereign is unable to devise.
From him departs the monarch of Argièr,
Who is rejected of his lady dear.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVII.

I.

A WOMAN for the most part reasons best
Upon a sudden motion, and untaught;
For with that special grace the sex is blest,
'Mid those so many gifts, wherewith 'tis fraught;
But man, of a less nimble wit possest,
Is ill at counsel, save, with sober thought,
He ruminate thereon, content to spend
Care, time and tröuble to mature his end.

II.

That seemed good counsel, but was ill indeed
Of Malagigi's, as before was said;
Albeit he so rescued in his need
His cousin Richardet, with odds o'erlaid,
When from the paynim monarchs him he freed
By ready demon, who his hest obeyed;
For sure he never deemed they should be borne,
Where they would work the Christian army scorn.

III.

Had he some little space for counsel stayed,
(We with the same success may well suppose)
He to his cousin might have furnished aid,
Yet brought not on the Christian host their foes:
That evil sprite he might as well have made,
Him, who embodied in the palfrey goes,
Eastward or west, so far that lady bear,
That France should hear no further of the pair.

IV.

So the two lovers, following her who flies,
To other place than Paris might be brought:
But this calamity was a surprise
On Malagigi, through his little thought;
And fiendish malice, banished from the skies,
Which ever blood and fire and ravage sought,
Guided them by that way to Charles' disaster;
Left to his choice by him, the wizard master.

V.

The wayward fiend who makes that palfrey ramp
Bears off the frighted Doralice amain;
Nor river nor yet yawning ditch, or swamp,
Wood, rock, or rugged cliff, the steed restrain;
Till, traversing the French and English camp,
And other squadrons of the mingled train,
Beneath the holy flag of Christ arraid,
He to Granada's king the fair conveyed.

VI.

The Sarzan and the Tartar the first day
That royal damsel a long while pursue;
Because her distant form they yet survey;
But finally they lose that lady's view;
When, like a lyme-dog, whom the hunters lay
On hare or roebuck's trail, the valiant two
Follow upon her track, nor halt, till told
That she is harboured in her father's hold.

VII.

Guard thyself, Charles: for, lo! against thee blown
Is such a storm, that I no refuge see:
Nor these redoubted monarchs come alone,
But those of Sericane and Circassy;
While Fortune, who would probe thee to the bone,
Has taken those two shining stars from thee,
Who kept thee by their wisdom and their light;
And thou remainest blind and wrapt in night.

VIII.

'Tis of the valiant cousins* I would speak:
Of these, Orlando of his wit bereft,
Naked, in sun or shower, by plain or peak,
Wanders about the world, a helpless weft;
And he, in wisdom little less to seek,
Rinaldo, in thy peril thee has left;
And, for in Paris-town she is not found,
In search of his Angelica is bound.

* Orlando and Rinaldo.

IX.

A cunning, old enchanter him deceived,
As in the outset of my tale was said:
Deluded by a phantom, he believed
Angelica was with Orlando fled;
And hence with jealousy, at heart, aggrieved
(Lover ne'er suffered worse) to Paris sped;
Whence he, as soon as he appeared at court,
By chance, was named to Britain to resort.

X.

Now, the field won, wherein with mickle fame
He drove King Agramant his works behind,
To Paris yet again the warrior came,
Searched convent, tower, and house, and, save confined
'Twixt solid walls or columns be the dame,
Her will the restless lover surely find:
Nor her nor yet Orlando he descries,
So forth in the desire to seek them hies.

XI.

Her to Anglantes or to Brava brought,
He deemed the Count enjoyed in mirth and play;
And vainly, here and there, that damsel sought,
Nor here nor there, descried the long-sought prey.
To Paris he repaired again, in thought
The paladin returning to waylay;
Because he deemed he could not rove at large
Without that Town, but on some special charge.

XII.

Within he takes a day or two's repose;
And, when he finds Orlando comes not there,
Again to Brava and Anglantes goes
Inquiring tidings of the royal fair;
Nor, whether morning dawns or noontide glows,
—Nor night nor day—his weary steed does spare;
Nor once—but twice a hundred times—has run
The selfsame course, by light of moon or sun.

XIII.

But the ancient foe, deluded by whose say,
To the forbidden fruit Eve raised her hand,
Turned his wan eyes on Charlemagne one day,
When he the good Rinaldo absent scanned;
And seeing what foul rout and disarray
Might at that time be given to Charles's band,
Of all the Saracens the choice and flower
Marshalled in arms against the Christian power.

XIV.

King Sacripant and King Gradasso (who
Whilere companionship in war had made,
When from Atlantes' palace fled the two)
Together to unite their arms, in aid
Of royal Agramant's beleaguered crew,
And to the ruin of King Charles, he swayed;
And where through unknown lands the warriors hied,
Made smooth the way, and served them as a guide.

XV.

Thither another fiend that ruthless foe
Bade Rodomont and Mandricardo bear
Through ways, by which his comrade was not slow
With the affrighted Doralice to fare:
A third, lest they their enterprize forego,
Rogero and Marphisa has in care:
But *their* conductor journeys not so fast;
And hence that martial pair arrives the last.

XVI.

Later by half an hour, against their foes,
So matched, Rogero and Marphisa speed;
Because the sable angel, who his blows
Aimed at the bands that held the Christian creed,
Provided, that the contest which arose
About that horse, his work should not impede;
Which had again been kindled, had the twain,
Rodomont and Rogero, met again.

XVII.

The first four ride until themselves they find
Where the besiegers and besieged they view;
And see the banners shaking in the wind,
And the cantonments of those armies two.
Here they short counsel took, and next opined,
In spite of Charlemagne's beleaguering crew,
To carry speedy succour to their liege,
And rescue royal Agramant from siege.

XVIII.

Where thickest camped lay Charles's host, they spurred,
Closing their files against the Christian foe.
"Afric and Spain!" is the assailants' word,
Whom at all points the Franks for paynims know.
—"To arms, to arms!" throughout their camp is heard:
But first is felt the Moorish sabre's blow:
Even on the rear-guard falls the vengeful stroke,
Not charged alone, but routed, beat and broke.

XIX.

The Christian host throughout is overthrown,
And how they know not, in tumultuous wise;
And that it is a wonted insult done
By Switzer or by Gascon, some surmise;
But—since the reason is to most unknown—
Each several nation to its standard flies,
This to the drum, that to the trumpet's sound,
And shriek and shout from earth to heaven redound.

XX.

All armed is Charlemagne, except his head,
And, girt with paladins, his faithful stay,
Arrived demanding what alarm has bred
Disorder in his host and disarray;
And stopt with menace this or that who fled,
And many fugitives, upon their way,
Some with maimed face, breast, arm, or hand, espied,
And some with head or throat with life-blood dyed.

XXI.

Advancing, he on earth saw many more,
Or rather in a lake of crimson laid,
Horribly weltering in their own dark gore,
Beyond the leech's and magician's aid [1];
And busts dissevered from the heads they bore,
And legs and arms—a cruel show—surveyed;
And, from the first cantonments to the last,
Saw slaughtered men on all sides as he past.

XXII.

Where the small band advances in such wise,
Deserving well eternal praise to gain,
Vouching their deeds, a long-drawn furrow lies,
A signal record of their might and main.
His army's cruel slaughter, with surprise,
Anger and rage, is viewed by Charlemagne.
So he whose shattered walls have felt its force,
Throughout his mansion tracks the lightning's course.

XXIII.

Not to the ramparts of the paynim crew
Of Agramant as yet had pierced this aid [2],
When, on the further side, those other two,
Rogero and Marphisa, thither made.
When, once or twice, that worthy pair a view
Have taken of the ground, and have surveyed
The readiest way assistance to afford,
They swiftly move in succour of their lord.

XXIV.

As when we spark to loaded mine apply,
Through the long furrow, filled with sable grain,
So fast the furious wildfire darts, that eye
Pursues the progress of the flash with pain;
And as dire ruin follows, and from high,
The loosened rock and solid bastion rain,
So bold Rogero and Marphisa rush
To battle, so the christian squadrons crush.

XXV.

Front and askance, the assailants smote, and low
On earth heads, arms, and severed shoulders lay,
Where'er the christian squadrons were too slow
To free the path and break their close array.
Whoe'er has seen the passing tempest blow,
And of the hill or valley, in its way,
One portion ravage and another leave[3],
May so their course amid that host conceive.

XXVI.

Many who had escaped by quick retreat,
Rodomont and those other furious three,
Thank God that he had given them legs and feet,
Wherewith to fly from that calamity;
And from the Child and damsel new defeat
Encounter, while with endlong course they flee:
As man, no matter if he stand or run,
Seeks vainly his predestined doom to shun.

XXVII.

Who 'scape one peril, into other fly,
And pay the penalty of flesh and blood;
So, by the teeth of dog, is wont to die
The fox, together with her infant brood,
By one who dwells her ancient cavern nigh
Unearthed, and with a thousand blows pursued;
When from some unsuspected place, that foe
Has filled with fire and smoke the den below.

XXVIII.

Marphisa and the Child, of danger clear,
Enter the paynim ramparts; and, with eyes
Upturned, the Saracens, with humble cheer,
Thank Heaven for the success of that emprize:
The paladins no longer are their fear;
The meanest Moor a hundred Franks defies;
And 'tis resolved, without repose, again
To drench with Christian blood the thirsty plain.

XXIX.

At once a formidable larum rose;
Horns, drums, and shrilling clarions filled the skies;
And the wind ruffles, as it comes and goes,
Banner and gonfalon of various dyes.
The Germans and the warlike Bretons close;
Ranged on the other part, in martial wise,
Italians, English, French, were seen, and through
Those armies furious war blazed forth anew.

XXX.

The force of the redoubted Rodomont,
And *that* of Agrican's infuriate son *,
That of Rogero, valour's copious font,
Gradasso's, so renowned for trophies won,
The martial maid, Marphisa's fearless front,
And might of Sacripant, excelled by none,
Made Charles upon Saint John and Denys call,
And fly for shelter to his Paris wall.

XXXI.

Of fierce Marphisa and her bold allies
The unconquered daring and the wondrous might,
Sir, was not of a nature—of a guise—
To be conceived, much less described aright:
The number slaughtered hence may you surmise!
What cruel blow King Charles sustained in fight!
Add to these warriors of illustrious name,
More than one Moor with Ferrau known to Fame.

XXXII.

Many through reckless haste were drowned in Seine,
For all too narrow was the bridge's floor,
And wished, like Icarus, for wings in vain,
Having grim death behind them and before.
Save Oliver, and Ogier hight the Dane,
The paladins are prisoners to the Moor:
Wounded beneath his better shoulder fled
The first, that other with a broken head.

* Mandricardo.

XXXIII.

And, like Orlando and Duke Aymon's son*,
Had faithful Brandimart thrown up the game,
Charles had from Paris into exile gone,
If he had scaped alive so fierce a flame:
Brandimart does his best, and when 'tis done,
Yields to the storm: Thus Fortune, fickle dame,
Now smiles upon the paynim monarch, who
Besieges royal Charlemagne anew.

XXXIV.

From earth beneath the widow's outcry swells,
Mingled with elder's and with orphan's prayer,
Into the pure serene, where Michael dwells,
Rising above this dim and troubled air;
And to the blest archangel loudly tells,
How the devouring wolf and raven tear
His faithful English, French, and German train,
Whose slaughtered bodies overspread the plain.

XXXV.

Red blushed the blessed angel, who believed
He ill obedience to his lord had paid;
And, in his anger, deemed himself deceived
By the perfidious Discord and betrayed:
He his Creator's order had received
To stir the Moors to strife, nor had obeyed;
Had rather in their eyes who marked the event,
Appeared throughout to thwart his high intent.

* Rinaldo.

XXXVI.

As servant faithful to his lord, and more
In love than memory strong, who finds that he
Has that forgotten which at his heart-core,
As precious as his life and soul should be,
Hastes to repair his error, nor before
He mend that fault, again his lord will see,
So not to God St. Michael will ascend
Until he has achieved his holy end.

XXXVII.

Again he to that monastery flew,
Where whilom he had Discord seen; and there
Seated in chapter sees her, while anew
Their yearly officers elected are,
She taking huge delight those friers to view,
That at each other hurled their books of prayer.
His hand within her locks the archangel twists,
And deals her endless scathe with feet and fists.

XXXVIII.

On her he next a cross's handle broke;
Wherewith her back, and arms, and head he plies:
His mercy with loud voice the wretch bespoke,
And hugged that angel's knees with suppliant cries.
Michael suspends not the avenging stroke
Till hunted to the Moorish camp she flies,
Then thus; "Believe worse vengeance yet in store,
"If I beyond these lines behold thee more."

XXXIX.

Albeit in back and arms all over shent
Was Discord by that angel, in her fear
Of suffering yet again such chastisement,
Such horrid fury and such blows severe,
She speedily to take her bellows went,
And, adding food to what she lit whilere,
And setting other ready piles afire,
Kindled in many hearts a blaze of ire;

XL.

And good Rogero (she inflames them so)
With Rodomont and Mandricardo fares
To Agramant; and all (since now the foe
The paynims pressed no more, the vantage theirs)
To him the seed of their dissensions show,
And what the bitter produce which it bears:
Then to the judgment of the king refer
Who first in listed field his claim should stir.

XLI.

As well Marphisa to Troyano's son *,
Relates her case, and will conclude the fray
Which with the Tartar king she had begun,
Because by him provoked to that assay;
Nor will she yield her place to any one,
No, not a single hour, yet less a day;
But with loud instances maintains her right
With Mandricardo first to wage the fight.

* Agramant.

XLII.

To have the first possession of the field
No less renowned king Rodomont contended,
Which he, the African array to shield,
Had interrupted and till now suspended.
Rogero to King Agramant appealed,
As having borne too long, though sore offended,
That Rodomont from him detained his horse,
Nor yet would meet him first in martial course.

XLIII.

The Tartar king, for more perplexity,
Denied on any ground Rogero's right
The bearer of the white-winged bird to be;
And was so passing wood with wrath and spite,
That, if to this those others would agree,
He would at once those several quarrels fight;
And so those others would as well have done,
If Agramant's consent they could have won.

XLIV.

King Agramant, with prayer and kindly word,
Had willingly appeased that jarring crew;
But since the foes were deaf to all accord,
Nor would assent to peace or truce anew,
Considered how at least he might afford
The field to each of them in order due;
And, as the best resolve, at last decreed,
Each should by lot possess the listed mead.

XLV.

Four lots the monarch bade prepare[4], which done,
This ' Rodomont and Mandricardo' said;
' Rogero and Mandricardo' were in one;
In one, ' Rogero and Rodomont' were read;
That ' Mandricardo and Marphisa' run':
Next, as the fickle goddess, Fortune, led,
The lots are drawn, and in the first appear
The Tartar king and sovereign of Argièr.

XLVI.

Rogero and Mandricardo for that play
Were next; Rogero and Rodomont were third;
Marphisa's lot and Mandricardo's lay
At bottom; whence the dame was deeply stirred;
Nor young Rogero seems a whit more gay:
Who knows the prowess of those two preferred
Will nothing in the listed combat leave
For him or for Marphisa to achieve.

XLVII.

There lies a place, of Paris little wide,
Covering a mile or somewhat less, and round;
Like ancient theatre, on every side,
Encompast by a tall and solid mound;
With castle whilom was it fortified,
Which sword and fire had levelled with the ground.
The Parmesan like circle does survey,
Whenever he to Borgo wends his way.

XLVIII.

In this place is prepared the listed mead,
Which palisades of little height inclose;
A square, of just proportions for that need,
With two capacious gates, as usage goes.
The day on which to combat have agreed
Those valiant knights, who will not balk their foes,
Beside the palisades, to left and right,
Facing each entrance, are pavilions pight.

XLIX.

In that, which looks towards the western sun,
Is lodged the giant monarch of Argièr;
And him assist his serpent-hide to don
Bold Ferrau and Circassia's cavalier.
Gradasso and the puissant Falsiron,
In that which fronts the morning hemisphere,
Clothe with their hands, in Trojan plate and chain,
The good successor of King Agricane.

L.

High on a throne of ample state appeared
Agramant and Marsilius; next in place
Were Stordilane and all the chiefs, revered
Throughout the squadrons of the paynim race.
Happy was he who found himself upreared
On mound or tree, above that level space.
Great was the throng, and round the palisade
On every side the eddying people swayed.

LI.

Were seated with the Queen of fair Castille
Queens, princesses, and dames of noble strain,
From Arragon, Granada, and Seville,
And Atlas' columns; and amid the train
Assembled to behold that fierce appeal,
Was placed the daughter of King Stordilane:
Two costly vests—one red, one green—she wore;
But ill the first was dyed, and faded sore[5].

LII.

In dress succinct Marphisa sate; in plight
Such as beseemed a warrior and a maid:
Thermodöon haply witnessed Hippolyte
And her fair squadron in like garb arrayed.
Afield already, in his livery dight,
Agramant's herald made proclaim, and said,
'It was forbid to all men, far and wide,
'In act or word, with either part to side.'

LIII.

The frequent crowd expects the double foe;
And often, in impatience, they complain,
And call those famous cavaliers too slow:
When from the Tartar's tent an angry strain
Is heard, and cries which multiply; sir, know
It was the martial king of Sericane*,
And puissant Tartar, who that question stirred,
And made the mighty tumult which was heard.

* Gradasso.

LIV.

Sericane's monarch, having with his hand
Equipt the king of Tartary all o'er,
Approached to gird him with that sovereign brand,
With which Orlando went adorned of yore.
When 'Durindana' on the hilt he scanned,
Graved with the quartering that Almontes wore;
Which from that wretched man, beside a font,
Youthful Orlando reft in Aspramont.

LV.

He, seeing this, agnised it for the blade
So famous, which Anglantes' warrior bore,
For which he had the fairest fleet arrayed
Which ever put to sea from eastern shore;
And had Castille's rich kingdom overlaid,
And conquered fruitful France some years before;
But cannot now imagine how that sword
Is in possession of the Tartar lord;

LVI.

And asks, 'had he by force or treaty won,
'And when and where and how, that faulchion bright;'
And Mandricardo said that 'he had done
'Fierce battle for that sword with Brava's knight*;
'Who feigned himself of sober sense foregone,
'Hoping that so he should conceal his fright:
—"For I on him would ceaseless war have made,"
(He added,) "while he kept the goodly blade."

* Orlando.

LVII.

Saying, ' The Count, in yielding to his foe
' That sword, the Beavers' known device had tried;
' Who, followed closely by the hunter, know
' Their fell pursuer covets nought beside.'
Ere he had heard him out,—" Nor I forego
" That sword to thee nor any one," (replied
Gradasso, fierce,) " well earned by me, at cost
" Of treasure, and of pain, and people lost.

LVIII.

" Some other faulchion for thyself purvey;
" This will I have; nor deem my reasons new;
" Whether Orlando wise or foolish stray,
" I make it mine where'er it meets my view.
" With none to witness, thou, beside the way
" Usurped that sword; I claim it as my due:
" For this my scimeter shall reasons yield,
" And we will try the cause in listed field.

LIX.

" Prepare to win the sword before thou rear
" That goodly blade against King Rodomont.
" To win his arms is use of cavalier,
" Before his foe in duel he affront."
—" No sweeter music ever soothes my ear"
(Replied the Tartar, as he raised his front)
" Than voice which champions me to martial field;
" But see that his consent the Sarzan* yield.

* Rodomont.

LX.

" Be thou the first; and, next on listed ground
" Let Sarza's valiant lord the question try;
" Nor doubt but I in readiness be found
" To thee and every other to reply."
" —Thou shalt not so the ordered lots confound,
" Or break our compact (was Rogero's cry):
" Either, first Rodomont shall take the field,
" Or shall to me his right of battle yield.

LXI.

" If that be true Gradasso has averred,
" That knight should win the arms he would assay,
" Thou hast no title to my white-winged bird,
" Save this from me thou first shalt bear away.
" But since, forsooth, whilere I said the word,
" I will not what I once pronounced unsay,
" That mine shall be the second battle, so
" That Argier's monarch first affront his foe.

LXII.

" I will confuse the order of the field,
" Throughout, if partially confused by thee;
" Abandon will I not my blazoned shield,
" Unless thou combat for it now with me."
—" Were one and the other Mars, for battle steeled,
(Replies, enraged, the king of Tartary)
" Nor one nor the other's might should make me waive
" My title to that shield and goodly glaive;

LXIII.

And overmastered by his choler, flies
With a clenched fist at him of Sericane,
And smites him with his right-hand in such wise,
As makes him quit his hold of Durindane.
Gradasso bold was taken by surprise,
Not deeming him so furious and insane;
And, while he looked not to the Tartar lord,
Found himself robbed of good Orlando's sword.

LXIV.

Fury and scorn Gradasso's visage heats,
Which seems to flash with fire, at that disgrace;
And with more rage and pain his bosom beats,
In that 'twas offered in such public place.
To draw his scimeter, the king retreats,
Intent upon revenge, some little space.
So Mandricardo on himself relies
Rogero he to fight, as well defies.

LXV.

"Come on in arms against me, both combined,
"And be King Rodomont the third!" (he said)
"Come Spain and Afric and all human kind;
"Ne'er will I turn." And he, at nought dismaid,
So saying, in his fury, sawed the wind
About him, with Almontes' noble blade,
Embraced his shield, and, full of choler, stood
Against Gradasso and Rogero good.

LXVI.

" Leave *me* the care," the fierce Gradasso cried,
" The phrensy of this madman to subdue."
—" Not so, by Heaven!" Rogero wroth replied,
" For I this field claim justly as my due."
—" Stand back!" and "stand *thou* back!" on either side
They shout; yet neither of the twain withdrew.
And thus among those three began a feud;
And thence some strange result would have ensued,

LXVII.

If many had not interposed, and sought
With little wit their fury to restrain;
Who had well-nigh too dear the experience bought
Of saving others at their proper pain;
Nor to accord the world had ever brought
Those knights, but that the worthy king of Spain*
Came thither with renowned Troyano's heir †;
Awed by whose sovereign presence all forbear.

LXVIII.

Agramant those contending warriors made
The cause of their so burning strife display;
Next earnestly bestirred himself, and prayed
Gradasso that he would, in courteous way,
Concede the Trojan Hector's goodly blade
To Mandricardo, solely for that day,
Until the cruel fight was at an end,
Wherein he should with Rodomont contend.

* Marsilius. † Agramant.

LXIX..

While royal Agramant would peace restore,
And now with this and now with that conferred,
From the other tent, between the Sarzan Moor
And Sacripant, another strife was heard.
Valiant King Sacripant (as said before)
To equip Sir Rodomont himself bestirred,
And he and Ferrau had that champion drest
In his forefather Nimrod's iron vest;

LXX.

And there had they arrived, where with his spume
The horse was making his rich bridle white:
I of the good Frontino speak, for whom
Rogero raged with yet unfelt despite.
King Sacripant, who plays the part of groom,
And has to bring afield the Sarzan knight,
Marks narrowly the courser's gear and shoes,
And sell and furniture throughout reviews;

LXXI.

And as his points and nimble parts, more near,
He, in this view, observes with better heed,
The youthful king, beyond all doubt, is clear
He sees his Frontilatte in that steed,
Him he of old had held so passing dear,
Whilom of such debates the fruitful seed;
And for whose loss, whilere he was so woe,
He evermore on foot resolved to go.

LXXII.

This from beneath him had Brunello[6] borne
Before Albracca, on the very day
Angelica's rare ring, and Roland's horn,
And Balisarda he conveyed away,
With fierce Marphisa's blade,—and on return
To Afric—to Rogero, from his prey,
Gave Balisarda and the courser, who
Was by the Child Frontino named anew.

LXXIII.

Assured 'twas no mistake, Circassia's chief
Turned him about to Rodomont, and cried;
" Reft from me in Albracca, by a thief,
" This horse is mine; which might be certified
" By them whose words would warrant well belief:
" But as my witnesses are distant wide,
" If it be questioned, I will make it plain,
" And will, with sword in hand, the truth maintain.

LXXIV.

" Yet am I well contented, for that we
" Have for these some few days together gone,
" To lend him for to-day; since well I see,
" That not without him could the fight be done;
" But on condition, that the courser be
" Acknowledged mine, and furnished as a loan:
" Otherwise hope not for that horse, save first
" Me, on this quarrel, thou in combat worst."

LXXV.

The furious king of Argier, that in pride
Surpassed all knights that ever girt the sword,
Whose paragon, for heart and prowess tried,
Meseems no ancient histories record,
Cried; " Sacripant, if any one beside
" Thyself, to me should utter such a word,
" He should deem quickly, from its bitter fruit,
" He from his birth would better have been mute.

LXXVI.

" But, for that fellowship in which we went,
" (As thou hast said) together, I to show
" Such patience and forbearance am content,
" As warning thee, thy purpose to forego,
" Until thou shalt have witnessed the event
" Of strife between me and my Tartar foe:
" When him I such example hope to make,
" That thou shalt humbly say, 'The courser take.'"

LXXVII.

Fierce and enraged, replied Circassia's peer,
" To play the churl with thee is courteous deed,
" But I to thee repeat more plain and clear,
" Thou ill wouldst aught design against that steed,
" For, while I an avenging sabre rear,
" This I prohibit thee, and, should it need,
" And every better means of battle fail,
" With thee for this would battle, tooth and nail."

LXXVIII.

They from dispute proceed to ribaldry,
From words to blows; and through their mickle ire,
Fierce battle was inflamed, and blazed more high
Than ever lightly-kindled straw took fire.
King Rodomont is steeled in panoply;
Sacripant neither plate nor mail attire:
Yet so in fence is skilled that nimble lord,
He seems all over sheltered by his sword.

LXXIX.

No greater were the daring and the might
(Though infinite) which Rodomont displaid
Than the precaution and the nimble sleight
Which the Circassian summoned to his aid:
No mill-wheel ever turns with swifter flight
The circling stone by which the grain is brayed,
Than Sacripant at need moves foot or hand,
And shifts now here, now there his restless stand.

LXXX.

But Serpentine and Ferrau interfere:
They with drawn swords the twain asunder bore;
With them Grandonio was and Isolier,
And many other leaders of the Moor.
This was the tumult which was heard whilere
In the other tent, what time they laboured sore,
Rogero vainly to a peace to bring
With Tartary's and Sericana's king.

LXXXI.

This while some voice to Agramant the news
Reports aright, that Ulien's mighty seed*,
With Sacripant, Circassia's king, pursues
A fierce and furious quarrel for the steed.
Agramant, whom so many jars confuse,
Exclaims to King Marsilius; "Take thou heed
"That no worse evil mid these knights betide,
"While for this new disorder I provide."

LXXXII.

Rodomont reined his anger, and retired
Some deal, at his approaching sovereign's view;
Nor less respect in Sacripant inspired
The Moorish monarch; of the furious two,
He with grave voice and royal mien inquired
What cause of strife such deadly discord blew;
And having searched their quarrel to the root,
Would fain accord them; but with little fruit.

LXXXIII.

Circassia's monarch would not, on his side,
Longer his horse to Argier's lord allow,
Save humbly Rodomont to him applied,
That steed for this occasion to bestow.
To him Sir Rodomont, with wonted pride,
Returned for answer; "Neither Heaven nor thou
"Shall make me recognize as gift or loan
"What I with this good hand can make mine own."

* Rodomont.

LXXXIV.

The king bade Sacripant explain his right,
And how that horse was taken from him sought;
And this from first to last Circassia's knight
Rehearsed, and reddened as the tale he taught,
Relating to the king the robber's sleight;
'Who had surprised him overwhelmed with thought,
'Upon four spears his courser's saddle stayed,
'And from beneath the naked horse conveyed?'

LXXXV.

Marphisa, whom these cries, mid others, bring,
When of the robbery of the horse advised,
In visage is disturbed, remembering
How on that day her faulchion was surprised;
And when that courser (which equipt with wing
Appeared when flying her) she recognized;
And recognized as well—at first unknown—
The valiant king who filled Circassia's throne.

LXXXVI.

The others who stood round her, wont to hear
Brunello often boast of the deceit,
'Gan turn towards that wretch, and made appear
By open signs they knew him for the Cheat.
Marphisa who the subtle knave whilere
Suspected as the author of that feat,
Now questions this, now that, who all accord
In saying 'twas Brunello stole her sword;

LXXXVII.

'Who, well deserving as a fitting pain
'To dangle from the gallows-tree in air,
'By Agramant the crown of Tingitane
'(An ill example) was preferred to wear.'
This fires anew Marphisa's old disdain,
Nor she from instant vengeance will forbear,
For this, as well as other shame and scorn
She on her road had from that caitiff born.

LXXXVIII.

A squire laced on her helmet, at her hest:
She wore the remnant of her armour sheen;
Nor without martial cuirass on her breast,
Find I, that she ten times was ever seen,
Even from the day when first that iron vest
Braced on her limbs the passing-valiant queen:
With helm on head, where, mid the highest rows,
Brunello sits among the first, she goes.

LXXXIX.

Him by mid breast Marphisa griped amain,
And lifted up the losel from the ground;
As is rapacious eagle wont to strain
The pullet, in her talons circled round;
And bore him where the son of King Troyane
Heard the two knights their jarring claims propound.
He who perceives himself in evil hands,
Aye weeps, and mercy of that maid demands.

XC.

Above the universal noise and shout,
Which rose nigh equally on either side,
Brunello, who from all the crowd about
For pity now, and now for succour, cried,
So loud was heard, that of that ample rout
He gathered round himself the pressing tide.
Arrived before the Moorish army's head,
To him with haughty mien Marphisa said:

XCI.

" This thief (said she), thy vassal, will I slay,
" And with this hand of mine will knot the cord
" About his neck; because the very day
" He stole *his* courser, he purloined *my* sword.
" But is there any one who deems I say
" Amiss, let him stand forth and speak the word;
" For I on him will prove, before thine eyes,
" I have done right, and who gainsays me, lies.

XCII.

" But because haply some one may pretend
" I have till such a time of strife delayed
" My vengeance, when such famous knights contend,
" For three days shall the wretch's doom be stayed;
" In the mean time let him who would defend
" That caitiff, come himself, or send him aid.
" For afterwards, if none the deed prevent,
" His carcass shall a thousand birds content.

XCIII.

" I hence to yonder tower, which distant nigh
" Three leagues, o'erlooks a little copse, repair,
" But with one varlet in my company,
" And with one waiting-maid; if any dare
" Rescue the thief, let him come thither; I
" Wait the approach of his defenders there."
Thus she; and thither quickly wends her ways
Whither was said, nor any answer stays.

XCIV.

Held on the pommel grappled by his hair,
Brunello on Marphisa's courser lies:
The caitiff weeps, and shrieking in despair,
On all in whom he hopes, for succour cries.
In such confusion is Troyano's heir,
He sees no way through these perplexities;
And, that Marphisa thence Brunello bore
In such a guise, yet grieved the monarch more.

XCV.

Not that he loved the losel or esteemed,
Rather to him some time had borne despite;
And often had to hang the caitiff schemed,
Since he had forfeited the ring of might.
But here his honour touched the monarch deemed,
So that his visage reddened at the slight:
He would, in person, follow her at speed,
And to his utmost power avenge the deed.

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XCVI.

But the wise king, Sobrino, who was by,
Him from the quest endeavoured to dissuade,
And ' that with his exalted majesty
' Such enterprize were ill assorted,' said:
' Although firm hope, nay full security,
' He had to overcome that martial maid,
' If he with pain subdued a woman, shame,
' Rather than honour, would pursue his name.

XCVII.

' Small profit and much peril would succeed
' From any fight he should with her maintain,
(And he advised him) ' as the better deed,
' To leave that wretched caitiff to his pain;
' And albeit but a simple nod should need
' To free him, from that nod he should refrain.
' In that the monarch would do ill to force
' Even-handed Justice from her destined course.'

XCVIII.

" Thou to the fierce Marphisa may'st apply
" To leave his trial (he pursued) to thee,
" With promise, her in this to satisfy
" And to suspend him from the gallows-tree:
" And even should the maid thy prayer deny,
" Let her in every wish contented be:
" And rather than that she desert thy side,
" Let her hang him and every thief beside."

XCIX.

Right willingly King Agramant gave way
To King Sobrino's counsel sage and staid;
And let renowned Marphisa wend her way,
Nor scathed he, nor let scathe, that martial maid,
Neither endured that any her should pray;
And heaven knows with what courage he obeyed
That wise advice, to calm such ruder strife
And quarrel, as throughout his camp were rife.

C.

At this mad Discord laughed, no more in fear
That any truce or treaty should ensue;
And scowered the place of combat there and here,
Nor could stand still, for pleasure at the view.
Pride gamboled and rejoiced with her compeer,
And on the fire fresh food and fuel threw,
And shouted so that Michael in the sky
Knew the glad sign of conquest in that cry.

CI.

Paris-town rocked, and turbid ran the flood
Of Seine at that loud voice, that horrid roar;
And, so its echo rang in Arden's wood,
Beasts left their caverns in that forest hoar.
Alp and Cevenne's mountain-solitude,
And Blois, and Arles, and Rouen's distant shore,
Rhine, Rhone, and Saône, and Garonne, heard the pest;
Scared mothers hugged their children to their breast[8].

CII.

Five have set up their rest, resolved to be
The first their different quarrels to conclude:
And tangled so is one with other plea,
That ill Apollo's self could judge the feud[9].
To unravel that first cause of enmity
The king began—the strife which had ensued,
Because of beauteous Doralice, between
The king of Scythia* and her Algerine.

CIII.

King Agramant oft moved, between the pair,
Now here now there, to bring them to accord;
Now there now here, admonishing that pair,
Like faithful brother and like righteous lord:
But when he found that neither would forbear,
Deaf and rebellious to his royal word,
Nor would consent that lady to forego,
The cause of strife, in favour of his foe,

CIV.

As his best lore, at length the monarch said,
And to obey his sentence both were fain;
'That he who was by her preferred, should wed
'The beauteous daughter of King Stordilane:
'And that what was established on this head
'Should not be changed, to either's loss or gain.'
The compromise was liked on either side,
Since either hoped she would for him decide.

* Mandricardo.

CV.

The mighty king of Sarza, who long space
Before the Tartar, had loved Doralice,
(Who had preferred that sovereign to such grace
As modest lady may, nor do amiss)
Believed, when she past sentence on the case,
She must pronounce what would ensure his bliss.
Nor thus alone King Rodomont conceived,
But all the Moorish host with him believed.

CVI.

All know what exploits wrought by him had been
For her in joust and war; they all unsound
And weak King Mandricardo's judgement ween;
But he, who oft was with her on their round,
And oftener private with the youthful queen,
What time the tell-tale sun was under ground,
He, knowing well how sure he was to speed,
Laughed at the silly rabble's idle creed.

CVII.

They, after, ratify the king's award,
Between his hands, and next the suitors twain
Before that damsel go, that on the sward
Fixing her downcast eyes, in modest vein,
Avows her preference of the Tartar lord;
At which sore wondering stand the paynim train;
And Rodomont remains so sore astound,
He cannot raise his visage from the ground.

CVIII.

But wonted anger chasing shame which dyed
The Sarzan's face all over, he arraigned
The damsel's sentence, of the faulchion, tied
About his manly waist, the handle strained,
And in the king's and others' hearing cried;
" By this the question shall be lost or gained;
" And not by faithless woman's fickle thought,
" Which thither still inclines, where least it ought."

CIX.

King Mandricardo on his feet once more,
Exclaims, " And be it as it pleases thee."
So that ere yet the vessel made the shore
Unploughed remained a mighty space of sea;
But that his king reproved the Sarzan sore,
Ruling, ' that to appeal upon that plea
' No more with Mandricardo could avail,'
And made the moody Sarzan strike his sail.

CX.

Branded with double scorn, before those peers,
By noble Agramant, whose sovereign sway
He, as in loyal duty bound, reveres,
And by his lady on the selfsame day,
There will no more the monarch of Algiers
Abide, but of his band—a large array—
Two serjeants only for his service takes,
And with that pair the paynim camp forsakes.

CXI.

As the afflicted bull [10] who has foregone
His heifer, nor can longer warfare wage,
Seeks out the greenwood-holt and stream most lone,
Or sands at distance from his pasturage;
There ceases not, in sun or shade to moan;
Yet not for that exhales his amorous rage:
So parts, constrained his lady to forego,
The king of Argier, overwhelmed with woe.

CXII.

Rogero moved, his courser to regain,
And had already donned his warlike gear,
Then recollecting, that on listed plain
At Mandricardo he must couch the spear,
Followed not Rodomont, but turned his rein,
To end his quarrel with the Tartar, ere
He met in combat Sericana's lord
Within close barriers, for Orlando's sword.

CXIII.

To have Frontino ravished in his sight,
And be unable to forbid the deed,
He sorely grieves; but, when he shall that fight
Have done, resolves he will regain the steed;
But Sacripant, whom, like the youthful knight,
No quarrels in the Moor's pursuit impede,
And who was unengaged in other quest,
Upon the Sarzan's footsteps quickly prest;

CXIV.

And would have quickly joined him that was gone,
But for the chance of an adventure rare;
Which him detained until the day was done,
And made him lose the track of Ulien's heir:
A woman who had fallen into the Saône,
And who without his help had perished there,
The warrior drowning in that water found,
And stemmed the stream and dragged the dame aground.

CXV.

When afterwards he would remount the sell,
From him his restless charger broke astray,
Who fled before his lord till evening fell,
Nor lightly did the king that courser stay.
At last he caught him; but no more could spell
Where he had wandered from the beaten way:
Two hundred miles he roved, 'twixt hill and plain,
Ere he came up with Rodomont again.

CXVI.

How he by Sacripant was overtaken,
And fought by him, to his discomfit sore,
And how he lost his courser, how was taken[11],
I say not now, who have to say before,
With what disdain and with what anger shaken,
Against his liege and love, the Sarzan Moor
Forth from the Saracen cantonments sped,
And what he of the one and other said.

CXVII.

Wherever that afflicted paynim goes,
He fills the kindling air with sighs that burn;
And Echo oft, for pity of his woes,
With him from hollow rock is heard to mourn:
"O female mind! how lightly ebbs and flows
"Your fickle mood," (he cries,) "aye prone to turn!
"Object most opposite to kindly faith!
"Lost, wretched man, who trusts you to his scathe!

CXVIII.

"Neither my love nor length of servitude,
"Though by a thousand proofs to you made clear,
"Had power even so to fix your faithless mood,
"That you at least so lightly should not veer:
"Nor am I quitted, because less endued
"With worth than Mandricardo I appear;
"Nor for your conduct cause can I declare,
"Save this alone, that you a woman are.

CXIX.

"I think that nature and an angry God
"Produced thee to the world, thou wicked sex,
"To be to man a plague, a chastening rod;
"Happy, wert thou not present to perplex.
"So serpent creeps along the grassy sod;
"So bear and ravening wolf the forest vex;
"Wasp, fly, and gad-fly buzz in liquid air,
"And the rich grain lies tangled with the tare.

CXX.

" Why has not bounteous Nature willed that man
" Should be produced without the aid of thee,
" As we the pippin, pear, and service can
" Engraft by art on one another's tree?
" But she directs not all by certain plan;
" Rather, upon a nearer view, I see,
" In naming her, she ill can act aright,
" Since Nature is herself a female hight.

CXXI.

" Yet be not therefore proud and full of scorn
" Women, because man issues from your seed;
" For roses also blossom on the thorn,
" And the fair lily springs from loathsome weed.
" Despiteous, proud, importunate, and lorn
" Of love, of faith, of counsel, rash in deed,
" With that, ungrateful, cruel and perverse,
" And born to be the world's eternal curse!"

CXXII.

These plaints and countless others to the wind
Poured forth the paynim knight, to fury stirred;
Now easing in low tone his troubled mind,
And now in sounds which were at distance heard,
In shame and in reproach of womankind;
Yet certes he from sober reason erred:
For we may deem a hundred good abound,
Where one or two perchance are evil found.

CXXIII.

Though none for whom I hitherto have sighed
—Of those so many—have kept faith with me,
All with ingratitude, or falsehood dyed
I deem not, I accuse my destiny.
Many there are, and have been more beside
Unmeriting reproach:. but if there be,
'Mid hundreds, one or two of evil way,
My fortune wills that I should be their prey.

CXXIV.

Yet will I make such search before I die,
Rather before my hair shall wax more white,
That haply on some future day, even I
Shall say, 'That one has kept her promise plight.'
And should not the event my trust belie,
(Nor am I hopeless) I with all my might
Will with unwearied pain her praise rehearse
With pen and ink and voice, in prose and verse.

CXXV.

The Saracen, whom rage no less profound
Against his sovereign lord than lady swayed,
And who of reason thus o'erpast the bound,
And ill of one and of the other said,
Would fain behold that monarch's kingdom drowned
With such a tempest, with such scathe o'erlaid,
As should in Africk every house aggrieve,
Nor one stone standing on another leave.

CXXVI.

And would that from his realm, in want and woe,
King Agramant a mendicant should wend;
That through his means the monarch, brought thus low,
His fathers' ancient seat might reascend:
And thus he might the fruit of fealty show,
And make his sovereign see, a real friend
Was aye to be preferred in wrong or right,
Although the world against him should unite;

CXXVII.

And thus the Saracen pours forth his moan,
With rage against his liege and love possest;
And on his way is by long journeys gone,
Giving himself and courser little rest.
The following day or next, upon the Saône
He finds himself, who has his course addrest
Towards the coast of Provence, with design
To his African domain to cross the brine.

CXXVIII.

From bank to bank the stream was covered o'er
With boats of little burden, which conveyed,
For the supply of the invading Moor,
Victual, from many places round purveyed:
Since even from Paris to the pleasant shore
Of Acquamorta, all his rule obeyed;
And—fronting Spain—whate'er of level land
Was seen, extending on the better hand.

CXXIX.

The victual, disembarked from loaded barge,
Was laid on sumpter-horse or ready wain;
And sent, with escort to protect the charge,
Where barges could not come; about the plain,
Fat herds were feeding on the double marge,
Brought thither from the march of either reign;
And, by the river-side, at close of day,
In different homesteads lodged, the drovers lay.

CXXX.

The king of Argier (for the dusky air
Of night began upon the world to close)
Here listened to a village-landlord's prayer,
That in his inn besought him to repose.
—His courser stalled—the board with plenteous fare
Is heaped, and Corsic wine and Grecian flows [12];
For, in all else a Moor, the Sarzan drank
Of the forbidden vintage like a Frank.

CXXXI.

To warlike Rodomont, with goodly cheer
And kindlier mien, the landlord honour paid;
For he the port of an illustrious peer
In his guest's lofty presence saw pourtrayed.
But, sore beside himself, the cavalier
Had scarce his heart within him, which had strayed
To her—whilere his own—in his despite;
Nor word escaped the melancholy knight.

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CXXXII.

Mine host, most diligent in his vocation
Of all the trade who throughout France were known,
(In that he had, 'mid strange and hostile nation,
And every chance of warfare, kept his own)
—Prompt to assist him in his occupation,
Some of his kin had called; whereof was none
Who dared before the warrior speak of aught,
Seeing that paynim mute and lost in thought.

CXXXIII.

From thought to thought the Sarzan's fancy flies,
Himself removed from thence a mighty space,
Who sits so bent, and with such downcast eyes,
He never once looks any in the face.
Next, after silence long, and many sighs,
As if deep slumber had but then given place,
His spirits he recalls, his eyelids raises,
And on the family and landlord gazes.

CXXXIV.

Then silence broke, and with a milder air,
And visage somewhat less disturbed, applied
To him, the host, and those by-standers there,
To know, 'if any to a wife were tied;'
And landlord and attendants,—'that all were,'
To Sarza's moody cavalier replied:
He asked, 'what each conceited of his spouse,
'And if he deemed her faithful to her vows.'

CXXXV.

Except mine host, those others were agreed,
'That chaste and good their consorts they believed.'
—" Think each man as he will, but well I read,"
(The landlord said,) " you fondly are deceived:
" Your rash replies to one conclusion lead,
" That you are all of common sense bereaved;
" And so too must believe this noble knight,
" Unless he would persuade us black is white.

CXXXVI.

" Because, as single is that precious bird
" The phœnix, and on earth there is but one,
" So, in this ample world, it is averred,
" One only can a woman's treason shun.
" Each hopes alike to be that wight preferred,
" The victor who that single palm has won.
" —How is it possible that what can fall
" To one alone, should be the lot of all?

CXXXVII.

" Erewhile I made the same mistake as you,
" And that more dames than one were virtuous thought,
" Until a gentleman of Venice, who,
" For my good fortune, to this inn was brought,
" My ignorance by his examples true
" So ably schooled, he better wisdom taught.
" Valerio was the name that stranger bore [13];
" A name I shall remember evermore.

CXXXVIII.

" Of wives and mistresses the treachery
" Was known to him, with all their cunning lore.
" He, both from old and modern history,
" And from his own, was ready with such store,
" As plainly showed that none to modesty
" Could make pretension, whether rich or poor;
" And that, if one appeared of purer strain,
" 'Twas that she better hid her wanton vein.

CXXXIX.

" He of his many tales, among the rest,
" (Whereof a third is from my memory gone)
" So well one story in my head imprest,
" It could not be more firmly graved in stone:
" And what I thought and think, would be professed
" For that ill sex, I ween by every one
" Who heard; and, Sir—if pleased to lend an ear—
" To their confusion you that tale shall hear."

CXL.

—" What could'st thou offer which could better please
" At present" (made reply the paynim knight)
" Than sample, chosen from thine histories,
" Which hits the opinion that I hold, aright?
" That I may hear thee speak with better ease
" Sit so, that I may have thee in my sight."
But in the following canto I unfold
What to King Rodomont the landlord told.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVII.

1.

Beyond the leech's and magician's aid.

Stanza xxi. line 4.

It may perhaps be well to repeat that in an earlier period of society, skill in physic (as in other difficult arts) was often ascribed to magic. Some traces of this may still be found in our medical nomenclature, as in the word *carminative*, derived from *carmen* (a charm): and in fact such a belief still lurks in the caste which we may suppose in some points most resembles the general composition of society in an earlier age. Witness the cure of agues by charms, &c. &c.

2.

Not to the ramparts of the paynim crew
Of Agramant as yet had pierced this aid, &c.

Stanza xxiii. lines 1 and 2.

The reader is to recollect that the attack was made on the Christian camp, and that the assailants were penetrating through this to the Moorish camp.

3.

Whoe'er has seen the passing tempest blow,
And of the hill or valley, in its way,
One portion ravage and another leave, &c.

Stanza xxv. lines 5, 6, 7.

Such partial effects of hail storms are common in warm

countries, and have indeed been witnessed this summer in England.

4.

Four lots the sovereign bade prepare, &c.

Stanza xlv.

The original stanza contains an odd precision of statement and apparent carelessness of rhyme; the same being echoed in three alternate verses; an irregularity which carries with it a certain grace:

Fè quattro brevi porre; un Mandricardo
E Rodomonte scritti insieme avea,
Nell' altro era Ruggiero e Mandricardo,
Rodomonte e Ruggier l'altro dicea,
Dicea l'altro Marfisa e Mandricardo;
Indi a l'arbitrio de l' istabil Dea
Li fece trarre, etc.

Anguillara also, in his version of Ovid's Metamorphoses, has produced a striking effect by a yet more striking repetition of rhymes, in a description of chaos, which is familiar to Italian readers, but which may be cited, as little known to the English, who, naturally enough, are not much conversant with Italian translations of classical authors.

Pria che 'l ciel fosse 'l mar, la terra e 'l foco
Era 'l foco, la terra, il cielo, e 'l mare:
Ma 'l mar rendeva il ciel, la terra, e 'l foco
Deforme il foco, il ciel, la terra, e 'l mare.
Ch' ivi era e terra, e cielo, e mare, e foco,
Dov' era e cielo, e terra, e foco, e mare;
La terra, il foco, e 'l mare, era nel cielo
Nel mar, nel foco, e nella terra il cielo.

English critics object to the French and Italian poets the sort of licence which I conceive to be happily exercised in these stanzas. Confining my comments to the Italians, I may

remark, that, as their rhymes are, for the most part, divided by an intermediate one, the licence is much less liable to offend than where they are brought more nearly into contact, as in the couplet. Moreover, these critics are unjust in censuring the practice as exclusively foreign, since it is virtually tolerated in English poetry; where *of-fend* rhymes with *de-fend*, &c. &c.: whereas some Italian terminations, which appear to us of the same character, are, on account of a different division of their syllables in pronunciation, in reality legitimate rhymes; and thus *pose* makes as perfect a consonance with *ri-spose* as our *pent* with *spent*, and a thousand other words of a similar description.

Another injustice committed by English critics is, that while in criticising foreign poetry, they take false views of its licences, they seem to have no notion whatever of its rigors. Thus an English versifier does not scruple to employ the same word, used in the same sense, as a rhyme, often within two lines of its first occurrence. On the other hand, so little latitude is permitted to the Italian, except in long poems, that I doubt whether there is any instance of the same word being repeated as a rhyme in any canto of Dante, or canzone of Petrarch.

5.

Two vests—one red, one green—that damsel wore;
But ill the first was dyed, and faded sore.

Stanza li. lines 7 and 8.

In explanation of this odd specification of Flordelice's dress, Harrington, quoting from Fornari, observes, that Cicero talks about a man of two colours; but here something more is evidently typified; which may be thus interpreted according to the symbolical doctrine of the middle ages. *Red* was the colour of Rodomont (as we have seen in a former canto), and the ill dye which this had received, and its faded condition, indicate the feeble and evanescent character of the impression which he had made upon Flordelice. *Green* (on the significancy of which

I have before remarked) was indicative of her light and wanton disposition.

To us this account of Doralice's dress has that charm of circumstantiality which gives such an air of truth to all Ariosto's pictures: to his cotemporaries it was recommended by the esoteric doctrines I have mentioned, and, perhaps, it is this sort of double charm which helped to obtain for Ariosto the rare glory of present and posthumous popularity.

6.

This from beneath him had Brunello borne, &c.

Stanza lxxii. line 1.

The reader must recur to the INNAMORATO for all these robberies of Brunello.

7.

Upon four spears his courser's saddle stayed,
And from beneath the naked hôrse conveyed.

Stanza lxxxiv. lines 7 and 8.

This is one in the long catalogue of those thefts which has been before alluded to.

8.

Paris-town rocked, and turbid ran the flood
Of Seine, &c. &c.
Rhine, Rhone, and Saône, and Garonne, heard the pest;
Scared mothers hugged their infants to their breast.

Stanza ci. lines 1—8.

Contremuit nemus, et silvæ intonuere profundæ;
Audiit et Triviæ longe lacus; audiit amnis
Sulphureâ Nar albus aquâ, fontesque Velini;
Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectora natos.

VIRGIL.

9.

That ill Apollo's self could judge the feud.

Stanza cii. line 4.

The Delphic Apollo, whose oracle was famous for the solution of all questions and difficulties.

10.

As the afflicted bull, &c.

Stanza cxi. line 1.

Virgil, describing the termination of a battle between two bulls, says,

. . . . alter
Victus abit, longeque ignotis exulit oris;
Multa gemens ignominiam plagasque superbi
Victoris, tum quos amisit inultus amores;
Et stabula aspectans, regnis excessit avitis.

11.

How he by Sacripant was overtaken,
And fought by him, to his discomfit sore,
And how he lost his courser, how was taken, &c.

Stanza cxvi. lines 1, 2, 3.

This adventure, just touched upon here by Ariosto, is no where else mentioned by him or by Bayardo. *Hoole.*

12.

Corsic wine and Grecian flows.

Stanza cxxx. line 6.

So again in the fourth canto of the five, which are sometimes considered as apocryphal in England, but which are ascribed to Ariosto on as good grounds as any in the Furioso, we read

E avean vini
E Corsi e Greci, preziosi e fini.

And they had wine,
Corsic and Greek, of precious growth and fine.

This fact of Greek and Corsican wines being cited as if they were the best, or perhaps the only foreign wines generally known at this period, might lead us to suppose that the commerce of Italy was then more partial than other circumstances mentioned by its writers and their general description of its luxury and magnificence would induce us to imagine, were not such preferences as that indicated in the text often a mere matter of accident and fashion. Certainly the preference of Greek and Corsican wine cannot be ascribed to the then imperfect cultivation of the vine in France; for French wines had long previously to the time of Ariosto attained great celebrity.

13.

Valerio was the name that stranger bore.

Stanza cxxxvii. line 7.

A Venetian gentleman mentioned by the poet among his friends in the forty-sixth canto, and of whom he has here antedated the existence. This is among the names (in Venetian, *Valièr*) of the first twelve families of Venice (entitled *le dodici famiglie fondatrici di Venezia*), respecting which it is a curious fact, that by far the greater portion, that of *Valièr* or Valerio among the rest, has survived the extinction of the republic.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

To whatsoever evil tongue can tell
Of womankind King Rodomont gives ear;
Then journeys homeward; but that infidel
Finds by the way a place he holds more dear.
Here him new love inflames for Isabel;
But so the wishes of the cavalier
A frier impedes, who with that damsel wends,
Him by a cruel death the felon ends.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXVIII.

I.

Ladies, and all of you that ladies prize,
Afford not, for the love of heaven, an ear
To this, the landlord's tale, replete with lies,
In shame and scorn of womankind; though ne'er
Was praise or fame conveyed in that which flies
From such a caitiff's tongue; and still we hear
The sottish rabble all things rashly brand,
And question most what least they understand.

II.

Omit this canto, and—the tale untold—
My story will as clear and perfect be;
I tell it, since by Turpin it is told,
And not in malice or in rivalry:
Besides, that never did my tongue withhold
Your praises, how you are beloved by me
To you I by a thousand proofs have shown,
Vouching I am, and can but be, your own.

III.

Let him who will, three leaves or four pass-by,
Nor read a line; or let him, who will read,
As little of that landlord's history,
As of a tale or fiction, make his creed.
But to my story:—When his auditory
He saw were waiting for him to proceed,
And that a place was yielded him, o'eright
The cavalier, he 'gan his tale recite:

IV.

" Astolpho that the Lombard sceptre swayed,
" Who was King Monacho, his brother's heir,
" By nature with such graces was purveyed,
" Few e'er with him in beauty could compare:
" Such scarce Apelles' pencil had pourtrayed,
" Zeuxis', or worthier yet, if worthier were:
" Beauteous he was, and so by all was deemed,
" But far more beauteous he himself esteemed.

V.

" He not so much rejoiced that he in height
" Of grandeur was exalted o'er the rest,
" And that, for riches, subjects, and for might,
" Of all the neighbouring kings he was the best,
" As that, superior to each other wight,
" His beauty was throughout the world confest.
" This pleased the monarch, who the praise conferred,
" As that wherein he most delighted, heard.

VI.

" Faustus Latinus, one of his array,
" Who pleased the king, a Roman cavalier,
" Hearing ofttimes Astolpho now display
" The beauties of his hand, now of his cheer,
" And, questioned by that monarch, on a day,
" If ever in his lifetime, far or near,
" He any of such beauty had espied,
" To him thus unexpectedly replied:

VII.

" Faustus to him replied: ' By what I see,
' And what I hear, is said by every one,
' Few are there that in beauty rival thee;
' And rather I those few confine to one:
' Jocundo is that one, my brother he;
' And well I ween that, saving him alone,
' Thou leavest all in beauty far behind;
' But I in him thy peer and better find.'

VIII.

" Impossible Astolpho deemed the thing,
" Who hitherto had thought the palm his own;
" And such a longing seized the Lombard king
" To know that youth whose praises so were blown,
" He prest, till Faustus promised him to bring
" The brother praised by him, before his throne,
' Though 'twould be much if thither he repaired,'
(The courtier added) ' and the cause declared:

IX.

'Because the youth had ne'er been known to measure,
'In all his life, a single pace from Rome;
'But, on what Fortune gave him, lived at leisure,
'Contented in his own paternal dome;
'Nor had diminished nor encreased the treasure,
'Wherewith his father had endowed that home;
'And he more distant would Pavìa deem
'Than Tanäis another would esteem;

X.

'And that a greater difficulty were
'To tear Jocundo from his consort; who
'Was by such love united to that fair,
'No other will but hers the husband knew:
'Yet at his sovereign's hest he would repair
'To seek the stripling, and his utmost do.'
"The suit with offers and with gifts was crowned,
"Which for the youth's refusal left no ground.

XI.

"Faustus set forth, and, after few days' ride,
"Reached Rome, and his paternal mansion gained:
"There with entreaties so the brother plied,
"He to that journey his consent obtained;
"And wrought so well (though difficult to guide)
"Silent even young Jocundo's wife remained;
"He showing her what good would thence ensue,
"Besides what gratitude would be her due.

XII.

" Jocundo names a time to wend his way,
" And servingmen meanwhile purveys and steeds;
" And a provision makes of fair array;
" For beauty borrows grace from glorious weeds.
" Beside him or about him, night and day,
" Aye weeping, to her lord the lady reads;
' She knows not how she ever can sustain
' So long an absence, and not die with pain.

XIII.

' For the mere thought produced such misery,
' It seemed from her was ravished her heart's core.'
—' Alas! my love (Jocundo cried) let be
' Thy sorrows'—weeping with her evermore—
' So may this journey prosper! as to thee
' Will I return ere yet two months are o'er;
' Nor by a day o'erpass the term prescribed,
' Though me the king with half his kingdom bribed.

XIV.

" This brought his troubled consort small content:
" She, ' that the period was too distant,' said,
" And, ' that 'twould be a mighty wonderment,
' If her, at his return, he found not dead.'
" The grief which, day and night, her bosom rent,
" Was such, that lady neither slept nor fed:
" So that for pity oft the youth repented
" He to his brother's wishes had consented.

XV.

" She from her neck unloosed a costly chain
" That a gemmed cross and holy reliques bore;
" Which one, a pilgrim of Bohemia's reign,
" Had gathered upon many a distant shore;
" Him did her sire in sickness entertain,
" Returning from Jerusalem of yore;
" And hence was made that dying pilgrim's heir:
" This she undoes, and gives her lord to wear;

XVI.

" And round his neck entreats him, for her sake,
" That chain in memory of herself to wind:
" Her gift the husband is well pleased to take;
" Not that a token needs his love to bind:
" For neither time, nor absence, e'er will shake,
" Nor whatsoever fortune is behind,
" Her memory, which, rooted fast and deep,
" He still has kept, and after death will keep.

XVII.

" The night before that morning streaked the sky,
" Fixt for his journey, to his sore dismay,
" Her husband deemed that in his arms would die
" The wife from whom he was to wend his way.
" She slumbered not: to her a last goodbye
" He bade, while yet it lacked an hour of day,
" Mounted his nag, and on his journey sped;
" While his afflicted spouse returned to bed.

XVIII.

" Jocundo was not two miles on his road,
" When he that jewelled cross recalled to mind;
" Which he beneath his pillow had bestowed,
" And, through forgetfulness, had left behind.
' Alas! (the youth bethought him) in what mode
' Shall I excuse for my omission find,
' So that from this my consort shall not deem
' I little her unbounded love esteem?

XIX.

" He pondered an excuse; then weened 'twould be
" Of little value, if it were exprest
" By page or other—save his embassy
" He did himself; his brother he addrest;
' —Now to Baccano ride you leisurely,
' And there at the first inn set-up your rest;
' For I must back to Rome without delay;
' But trust to overtake you by the way.'

XX.

' No other but myself my need could do.
' Doubt not but I shall speedily be back.'
" —No servant took he, but, with an adieu,
" Jocundo, at a trot, wheeled round his hack,
" And when that cavalier the stream was through,
" The rising sun 'gan chase the dusky rack.
" At home he lighted, sought his bed, and found
" The consort he had quitted sleeping sound.

XXI.

" He, without saying aught, the curtains drew,
" And, what he least believed, within espied;
" For he beneath the quilt, his consort true,
" And chaste, saw sleeping at a stripling's side.
" Forthwith Jocundo that adulterer knew,
" By practice, of his features certified,
" In that he was a footboy in his train,
" Nourished by him, and come of humble strain.

XXII.

" To imagine his distress and wonderment,
" And warrant it, that other may believe,
" Is better than to make the experiment,
" And, like this wretch, the cruel proof receive:
" By anger stirred, it was his first intent
" To draw his sword, and both of life bereave;
" But love, which spite himself, he entertained
" For that ungrateful woman, him restrained.

XXIII.

" You see if like a vassal he obeyed
" This ribald Love, who left him not the force
" To wake her, lest to know her guilt surveyed,
" Should in his consort's bosom move remorse.
" As best he could, he forth in silence made,
" The stair descended, and regained his horse.
" Goaded by Love, he goads his steed again,
" And ere they reach their inn rejoins his train.

XXIV.

" His change of mien to all was manifest;
" All saw his heart was heavy; yet not one,
" Mid these, in any sort, the reason guessed,
" Nor read the secret woe which caused his moan;
" All thought he had to Rome his steps addrest,
" Who to the town, surnamed of horns, had gone [1].
" That Love has caused the mischief all surmise,
" Though none of them conjectures in what wise.

XXV.

" His brother weened he was in grief immersed
" For his deserted wife: he, on his side,
" For other reason, inly chafed and cursed,
" —That she was but too well accompanied.
" Meanwhile, with swelling lips and forehead pursed,
" The ground that melancholy stripling eyed.
" Faustus, who vainly would apply relief,
" Ill cheered him, witless what had caused his grief.

XXVI.

" He for his sore an evil salve had found,
" And, where he should relieve, encreased his woes;
" Who, with the mention of his wife, that wound
" Inflamed and opened, which he sought to close.
" He rests not night nor day, in sorrow drowned;
" His appetite is gone, with his repose,
" Ne'er to return; and (whilom of such fame).
" His lovely visage seems no more the same.

XXVII.

" His eye-balls seem deep-buried in his head,
" His nose seems grown—his cheeks are pined so sore—
" Nor even remains (his beauty so is fled)
" Enough to warrant what he was before.
" Such fever burns him, of his sorrow bred,
" He halts on Arbia's and on Arno's shore[2];
" And, if a charm is left, 'tis faded soon,
" And withered like a rose-bud plucked at noon.

XXVIII.

" Besides that Faustus sorrowed to descry
" Him so bested; worse cause for sorrowing
" Was to that courtier to appear to lie
" Before Astolpho; he was pledged to bring
" One that was fairest deemed in every eye,
" Who must appear the foulest to that king;
" Yet he continued on his way to wend,
" And brought him to Pavìa in the end.

XXIX.

" Not that forthwith he lets the youth be seen,
" Lest him the king of little wit arraign;
" He first by his dispatches lets him ween,
" That thither he Jocundo brings with pain:
" Saying, that of his beauteous air and mien
" Some secret cause of grief had been the bane,
" Accompanied by a distemper sore:
" So that he seemed not what he was before.

XXX.

" Glad was the monarch, of his coming taught,
" As of a friend's arrival he could be;
" Since in the universal world was nought,
" That he so much desired as him to see:
" Nor was the Lombard king displeased in ought
" To mark his guest's inferiority;
" Though, but for his misfortune, it was clear,
" He his superior would have been or peer.

XXXI.

" Lodged by him in his palace, every day
" And every hour, the stranger youth he sees,
" Studious to honour him, and bids purvey
" Store of provision for his better ease.
" While still his thoughts to his ill consort stray,
" Jocundo languishes; nor pastimes please
" That melancholy man; nor music's strain
" One jot diminishes his ceaseless pain.

XXXII.

" Above his chambers, on the upper floor,
" Nearest the roof, there was an ancient hall:
" Thither, in solitary mood, (for sore
" Pastime and company, the stripling gall,)
" He aye betakes himself; while evermore
" Sad thoughts some newer cause of grief recall.
" He here (who would believe the story?) found
" A remedy unhoped, which made him sound.

XXXIII.

" At that hall's farther end, more feebly lighted,
" (For windows ever closed shut out the day)
" Where one wall with another ill united,
" He, through the chink, beheld a brighter ray:
" There laid his eye, and saw, what he had slighted
" As hard to credit, were it but hearsay:
" He hears it not, but this himself descries;
" Yet hardly can believe his very eyes.

XXXIV.

" He of the Queen's apartment here has sight[3],
" Her choicest and her priviest chamber, where
" Was never introduced whatever wight,
" Save he most faithful was esteemed: he there,
" As he was peeping, saw an uncouth fight;
" A dwarf was wrestling with the royal fair;
" And such that champion's skill, though under-grown,
" He in the strife his opposite had thrown.

XXXV.

" As in a dream, Jocundo stood, beside
" Himself, awhile of sober sense bereaved;
" Nor, but when of the matter certified,
" And sure it was no dream, his sight believed.
—' A scorned and crooked monster,' (then he cried,)
' Is, as her conqueror, by a dame received,
' Wife of the comeliest, of the curtiest wight,
' And greatest monarch; Oh! what appetite!'

XXXVI.

" And he the consort to whom he was wed,
" Her he most used to blame, recalled to mind,
" And, for the stripling taken to her bed,
" To deem the dame less culpable inclined:
" Less of herself than sex the fault he read,
" Which to one man could never be confined:
" And thought, if in one taint all women shared,
" At least *his* had not with a monster paired.

XXXVII.

" To the same place Jocundo made return,
" At the same hour, upon the following day;
" And, putting on the king the self-same scorn,
" Again beheld that dwarf and dame at play:
" And so upon the next and following morn;
" For—to conclude—they made no holiday:
" While she (what most Jocundo's wonder moved)
" The pigmy for his little love reproved.

XXXVIII.

" One day, amid the rest, the youth surveyed
" The dame disordered and opprest with gloom;
" Having twice summoned, by her waiting-maid,
" The favoured dwarf, who yet delayed to come;
" A third time by the lady sent, she said:
—' Engaged at play, Madonna, is the groom,
' Nor, lest he lose a doit, his paltry stake,
' Will that discourteous churl his game forsake.'

XXXIX.

" At such strange spectacle, the Roman knight
" Cleared up his brow, his visage and his eyes;
" He jocund, as in name, became in sprite,
" And changed his tears for smiles; with altered guise,
" He waxes ruddy, gay, and plump in plight,
" And seems a cherubim of Paradise.
" So that such change with wonderment all see,
" Brother and king, and royal family.

XL.

" If from the youth Astolpho wished to know
" From whence this sudden light of comfort came,
" No less Jocundo this desired to show,
" And to the king such injury proclaim:
" But willed that like himself he should forego
" Revenge upon the author of that shame:
" Hence, that he might discern her guilt, yet spare,
" He made him on the *Agnus Dei* swear [4].

XLI.

" He made him swear that he, for nothing said,
" Or seen, which might to him displeasing be,
" (Though he, in what he should discover, read
" An outrage offered to his majesty,)
" Would, now or ever, venge him on this head:
" Moreover him he bound to secrecy;
" That the ill doer ne'er, through deed or word,
" Might guess his injured king that case had heard.

XLII.

" The monarch, who to every thing beside
" Could better have given credit, freely swore:
" To him the cause Jocundo signified,
" Why he had many days lamented sore;
—' Because he had his evil wife espied
' In the embraces of a serjeant poor ';
' And vowed he should in fine have died of grief,
' If he for longer time had lacked relief.

XLIII.

' But that within his highness' palace,' said,
' He had witnessed what had much appeased his woe;
' For, if foul shame had fallen upon his head,
' At least he was not single;' " saying so,
" He to that chink the Lombard monarch led,
" Who spied the mannikin of hideous show.
" . . . . . .
" . . . . . .

XLIV.

" You may believe he shameless deemed that act,
" Without my swearing it; he, at the sight,
" It seemed, would go distraught,—with fury racked,
" He against every wall his head would smite—
" Would cry aloud—would break the solemn pact,
" Yet kept parforce the promise he had plight;
" And gulped his anger down and bitter scorn;
" Since on the holy wafer he had sworn.

XLV.

" Then to Jocundo; ' What remains to me
' To do in this misfortune, brother, speak;
' Since vengeance with some noted cruelty
' Thou wilt not let me on the sinners wreak.'
" (Jocundo answered) ' Let these ingrates be;
' And try we if all women are as weak;
' And if the wives of others can be won
' To do what others by our own have done.

XLVI.

' Both fair and youthful, measured by this scale,
' Not easily our equals shall we find;
' What woman but to us shall strike her sail,
' If even to the ugly these are kind?
' At least, if neither youth nor grace avail,
' The money may, with which our bags are lined;
' Nor will I that we homeward more return,
' Ere the chief spoils we from a thousand earn.

XLVII.

' Long absence, seeing many a distant part,
' Converse with different women, oft allay,
' As it would seem, the troubles of a heart,
' Whereof Love's angry passions make their prey.'
" The king is pleased to hear the youth impart
" This counsel, nor his journey will delay:
" Thence on their road, with but two squires beside,
" He and the Roman knight together ride.

XLVIII.

" Disguised they go through France and Italy,
" They Flanders next and England scower, and where
" A woman they of lovely visage spy,
" Aye find the dame compliant with their prayer.
" They upon some bestow what others buy,
" And oft replaced their squandered treasures are.
" Our travellers to the wives of many sued,
" And by as many other dames were wooed.

XLIX.

" By solid proof those comrades ascertain,
" *Here* tarrying for a month, and *there* for two,
" That their own wives are of no other vein
" Than those of others, and as chaste and true.
" After some season, wearied are the twain
" With ever running after something new:
" For, without risk of death, thus evermore
" The intruders ill could enter other's door.

L.

' —'Twere best to find a girl whose natural bent
' And face to both of us should pleasing be;
' A girl, that us in common might content,
' Nor we in her find cause for jealousy;
' And wherefore wouldst thou that I should lament
' More than with other, to go halves with thee?'
(Exclaimed Astolpho) ' well I know is none,
' Of all the female sex, content with one.

LI.

' One damsel that in nought shall us constrain,
' —Then only, when disposed to please the fair—
' Will we in peace and pleasure entertain,
' Nor we, about her, have dispute or care.
' Nor, deem I, she with reason could complain:
' For if two fell to every other's share,
' Better than one might she keep faith with two;
' Nor haply we such frequent discord view.'

LII.

" Much seems the king's proposal to content
" The Roman youth; and thus it is, the twain,
" To execute Astolpho's project bent,
" Journey by many a hill and many a plain;
" And find at last, well fitting their intent,
" The daughter of a publican of Spain,
" Of presence and of manners framed to win;
" Whose father at Valencia kept his inn.

LIII.

" As yet, upon the bloom of spring, the maid
" Was a fresh flower that scarce began to blow:
" Her sire with many children was o'erlaid,
" And was to poverty a mortal foe.
" Hence 'tis an easy matter to persuade
" Mine host his buxom daughter to forego,
" And let them, where they will the damsel bear;
" In that to treat her well the travellers swear.

LIV.

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" They to Zattiva come upon the day
" That from Valencia they had bent their way.

LV.

" The travellers from their inn to street and square
" And places, public and divine, resort;
" Who, wheresoever they had made repair,
" Themselves were so accustomed to disport,
" The girl is with the valets left in care,
" Who make the beds, and wearied hackneys sort:
" While others in the hostel-kitchen dight
" The meal against their lords' return at night.

LVI.

" As groom, a stripling in the hostel plied,
" Who in the other landlord's house had been:
" He, from her childhood at the damsel's side,
" Had joyed her love: they, without change of mien,
" On meeting, closely one another eyed,
" Since either apprehended to be seen:
" But when alone—now left together—raised
" Their eyelids and on one another gazed.

LVII.

" The stripling asked her, ' whitherward they sped,
' And of the two which claimed her as his right;'
" This, point by point, to him Flammetta read;
" Flammetta she, the Greek that boy was hight.
' —When I had hoped the time was coming,' said
" The Greek—' that I should live with thee, my light,
' Flammetta, thou, alas! art lost to me,
' Nor know I if I more thy face shall see.

LVIII.

' I to the bitter dregs the cup must drain
' Of promised sweets; since thou art others' prey.
' 'Twas my design, having with mickle pain
' And labour sore, some money put away,
' Which I had hoarded out of frequent gain
' From parting guests, and from my yearly pay,
' To seek again Valencia, and demand
' Thee from thy sire in lawful wedlock's band.'

LIX.

" The damsel shrugs her shoulders, and complains;
" And—' that he is too late'—is her reply.
" The Greek laments and sobs, and partly feigns:
' —Wilt thou (he answered her) thus let me die?
' Let me, at least, exhale my amorous pains!
' Let me, but once, in thine embraces lie!
' For every moment in thy presence spent,
' Ere thou depart, will make me die content.'

LX.

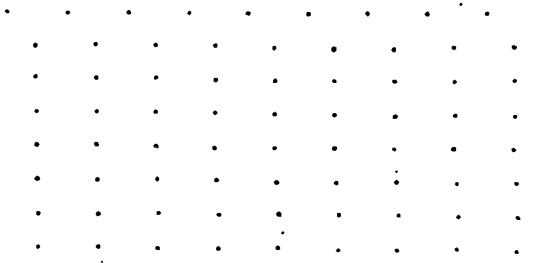
" To him the damsel, full of pity, cries;
' Believe, I covet this no less than thee;
' But here, surrounded by so many eyes,
' Is neither time nor opportunity.'
' —I feel assured' (to her that youth replies)
' Were I beloved by you, as you by me,
' This very night you would find out a place
' Wherein to solace us some little space.'

LXI.

" She bade him come—when she awhile had thought—
" When he believed that all asleep were laid;
" And how by him her chamber should be sought,
" And how he should return, at full, displaid.
" The cautious stripling did as he was taught,
" And, when he found all silent, thither made:
" He pushed, till it gave way, the chamber-door,
" And, upon tiptoes, softly paced the floor.

LXII.

LXIII.



LXIV.

LXV.

LXVI.

LXVII.

LXVIII.

LXIX.

LXX.

LXXI.

" Gazing on one another, with surprise,
" The monarch and Jocundo are confused;
" Nor even to have heard a case surmise
" Of two, that ever thus had been abused:
" Then laughed so, that they sate with winking eyes,
" And open mouth, and lungs which breath refused;
" And, wearied with the mirth her tale had bred,
" Fell backwards, both, exhausted on the bed.

LXXII.

" When they had laughed so loud a laugh, the dew
" Stood in their eyes, and each with aching breast
" Remained, the pair exclaimed: ' What shall we do
' In order not to be a woman's jest?
' Since we, with all our heed, between us two,
' Could not preserve the one by us possest,
' A husband, furnished with more eyes than hair,
' Parforce must be betrayed with all his care.

LXXIII.

' A thousand, beauteous all, have we found kind,
' Nor one of those so many has stood fast.
' If tried, all women we by proof should find
' Like these; but be the experiment our last.
' Then we may deem our own not worse inclined
' Than are the wives of others, and as chaste:
' And, if like others we our own discern,
' I hold it best that we to them return.'

LXXIV.

" When they have come to this resolve, they, through
" Flammetta, call the youth into their bower;
" And with the girl her leman, in the view
" Of many, gift, and add a fitting dower.
" They mount, and to the east their way pursue,
" Accustomed westward hitherto to scower;
" To their deserted wives again repair,
" Nor of their after deeds take farther care."

LXXV.

Here paused mine host; to whom on every side
His audience had with careful heed attended.
Rodomont listened, nor a word replied,
Until the landlord's story was suspended.
Then—" Fully I believe," that paynim cried,
" The tale of women's frauds would ne'er be ended;
" Nor could that man in any volume note
" The thousandth part, who would their treasons quote."

LXXVI.

Of sounder judgement, 'mid that company,
There was an elder, one more wise and bold;
That undefended so the sex to see,
Was inly wroth, and could no longer hold:
To the relater of that history
He turned; and, " Many things we have been told"
(Exclaimed that ancient) " wherein truth is none,
" And of such matters is thy fable one.

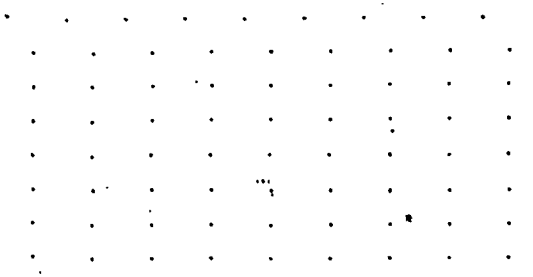
LXXVII.

" Him I believe not, that told this to you,
" Though in all else he gospel-truths exprest;
" As less by his experience, than untrue
" Conceit respecting women prepossest.
" The malice which he bears to one or two,
" Makes him unjustly hate and blame the rest.
" But you shall hear him, if his wrath o'erblow,
" Yet greater praise than blame on these bestow.

LXXVIII.

" And he a larger field for speaking well
" Will find, than blaming womankind withal;
" And of a hundred worthy fame may tell,
" For one whose evil deeds for censure call.
" He should exalt the many that excel,
" Culled from the multitude, not rail at all.
" If otherwise your friend Valerio said,
" He was by wrath, and not by reason, led.

LXXIX.



LXXX.

LXXXI.

LXXXII.

LXXXIII.

LXXXIV.

So reasoning, that just elder and sincere,
With ready instances, supports his creed;
Showing there many women are who ne'er
Sinned against chastity, in word or deed:
But him with impious visage and severe
The paynim scared, ill pleased the truth to read.
So that, through fear, he further speech forbore,
But changed not therefore aught his former lore.

LXXXV.

Having stopt further question in this wise,
The paynim monarch from the table rose:
Then lays him on his bed, till from the skies
The dusky shades depart, and morning glows:
But spends a larger part of night in sighs
At his liege-lady's sin, than in repose.
Rodomont thence departs at dawn of day,
Resolved by water to pursue his way.

LXXXVI.

For with such care for his good horse's plight,
As is becoming a good cavalier,
The courser fair and good, made his in spite
Of young Rogero and Circassia's peer;
Seeing he, for two days, that horse's might
Had taxed too hardly in his long career,
—As well he for his ease embarked the steed,
As to pursue his way with better speed.

LXXXVII.

He straight makes launch the vessel from the marge,
And bids put forth the oars from either side:
Nor big nor deeply laden, she, at large,
Descends the Sôane, transported by the tide.
Care never quits him, though the shifting barge
The king ascend, or nimble horse bestride:
This he encounters aye on prow or poop,
And bears behind him on his courser's croup[6];

LXXXVIII.

Rather within his head or heart always
Care sits; whence every comfort is o'erthrown:
No remedy the wretched man surveys,
In that his enemies are in the town.
From others hope is none; since they who raise
This fearful war against him, are his own:
Vext by that cruel one, aye night and day,
Whom he might hope to find his natural stay.

LXXXIX.

Rodomont navigates the day and night
Ensuing, aye by heavy thoughts opprest;
Nor can he ever banish the despite,
Suffered from King and Lady, from his breast.
The self-same grief sate heavy on his sprite
Aboard the bark, as when his steed he prest.
Such fire was not by water to be drowned,
Nor he his nature changed by changing ground[7].

XC.

As the sick man who with a fever glows,
And, weak and weary, shifts his place in vain,
Whether he right or left himself bestows,
And hopes in turning some relief to gain,
Finds neither on *this* side nor *that* repose,
But everywhere encounters equal pain;
The pagan monarch so found small relief,
By land or water, for his secret grief.

XCI.

Rodomont brooked no more aboard to stay,
But bade them land him, and by Lyons hied;
By Vienne and Valence next took his way,
And the rich bridge in Avignon descried.
For these and more, which 'twixt the river lay
And Celtiberian hills[8] upon that side,
(Theirs, from the day they conquered the champaigne)
Obeyed the kings of Afric and of Spain.

XCII.

To pass to Afric straight, the cavalier
Kept to the right, towards Acquamorta's shore,
And lighted on a stream and hamlet, dear
To Ceres and to Bacchus, which that Moor
Found quitted by the peasants, in their fear,
As often by the soldier harried sore.
The beech upon one side broad ocean laved,
And on the other yellow harvests waved.

XCIII.

Here, newly built upon a hillock's crest,
A little church the Saracen espied;
Abandoned by its priesthood, like the rest,
For war was flaming upon every side.
Rodomont of this place himself possest;
Which, from its site, as well as lying wide
Of fields, from whence he tidings loathed to hear,
So pleased him, he for it renounced Argièr.

XCIV.

He changed his scheme of seeking Afric's land,
(So this fair spot seemed fit for his behoof!)
And here housed carriages, and steed, and band,
Together with himself, beneath one roof.
At few leagues' distance, did Montpelier stand,
And other wealthy towns, not far aloof.
The village was upon a river's side,
So that its every need might be supplied.

XCV.

Here standing, full of thought, upon a day,
(Such was his common wont) the paynim spied,
Advancing by a narrow path, which lay
Through a green meadow, from the adverse side,
A lovely damsel, that upon her way
Was by a bearded monk accompanied;
And these behind them led a lusty steed,
Who bore a burden, trapt with sable weed.

XCVI.

Who that attendant monk and damsel were,
And what that burden, will to you be clear,
Remembering Isabella in the fair,
Charged with the corse of her Zerbino dear:
I left her, where from Provence, in the care
Of that good sire, she bowned herself to steer,
By whom persuaded, had the lady given
The remnant of her virtuous life to heaven.

XCVII.

Although in her pale face and troubled guise,
The sorrow of that dame is manifest,
Although two fountains are her streaming eyes,
And sobs aye issue from her burning breast,
And more beside of suffering testifies,
With what a load of grief she is opprest,
Yet, in her faded cheek such beauties meet,
Love and the Graces there might fix their seat.

XCVIII.

As soon as he of Sarza saw appear
The beauteous dame, he laid the thought aside
Of hatred to that gentle race and dear,
By whom alone the world is glorified;
And best by Isabel the cavalier
Believed his former love would be supplied,
And one love by another be effaced,
As bolt by bolt in timber is displaced.

XCIX.

Her with the kindest mien and mildest tone
That he could fashion, met the Sarzan knight;
To whom the dame her every thought made known;
And said, when she was questioned of her plight,
'She would with holy works—this world forgone—
'Seek favour in her Heavenly Father's sight.'
Loud laughed that godless paynim at the thought,
Who every faith and worship held at nought;

C.

And said, 'that she from reason wandered wide,
'And termed her project sudden and unsound;
'Nor deemed her less to blame than those who hide,
'Through greediness, their treasure under ground,
'And keep it from the use of all beside,
'Though hence no profit to themselves redound.
'Rightly were prisoned lion, snake, and bear,
'But ill whate'er is innocent and fair.'

CI.

The monk, that to this talk has lent an ear,
Prompt with advice that mournful dame to stay,
And lest she quit her course, prepared to steer
His bark, like practised pilot, on her way,
A sumptuous table, rich in spiritual cheer,
Had speedily bestirred him to array;
But, born with evil taste, that paynim rude
No sooner tasted, than he loathed, the food.

CII.

And having interrupted him in vain,
Nor having power to make him stint his lore,
That paynim, stirred to fury, broke the rein
Of patience, and assailed the preacher hoar.
But haply wearisome might seem the strain,
If I upon this theme dilated more:
So here I close, nor words will idly spend,
Admonished by that ancient's evil end.

NOTES TO CANTO XXVIII.

1.

All thought he had to Rome his steps address,
Who to the town, surnamed of horns, had gone.
Stanza xxiv. lines 5 and 6.

Credeano che da lor si fosse tolto
Per gire a Roma, e gito era a *Corneto.*

As an exact equivalent, we might say, if the scene were laid in England, that they thought he was gone to London, whereas he had gone to *Hornsey.*

2.

He halts on Arbia's and on Arno's shore.
Stanza xxvii. line 6.

That is, at Sienna and Florence; Sienna being situated upon the Arbia, and Florence upon the Arno.

3.

He of the Queen's apartments here has sight, &c.
Stanza xxxiv. line 1.

Ariosto seems to have got sight of the story which forms the prologue to the Arabian Nights.

4.

He made him on the AGNUS DEI *swear.*
Stanza xl. line 8.

Il re fece giurar *su l' Agnus Dei.*

Not upon the figured representation of the lamb of God, as the reader might possibly suppose, but upon the host; as appears from a verse in a succeeding stanza.

Since on the holy wafer he had sworn.
Stanza xliv. line 8.

Poichè giurato avea su l' ostia sacra;

the first expression of *Agnus Dei* having been probably suggested by the words used by the priest in the sacrament of the communion;

Ecce! AGNUS DEI *qui tollit peccata mundi!*

5.

In the embraces of a serjeant poor.
Stanza xlii. line 6.

In braccio d'un suo vil sergente.

I have already observed that serjeant in its general signification formerly meant servant.

6.

This he encounters aye on prow or poop,
And bears behind him on his courser's croup.
Stanza lxxxvii. lines 7 and 8.

Scandit æratas vitiosa naves
Cura . . . . .
. . . . . .
Post equitem sedet atra Cura.

7.

Nor he his nature changed by changing ground.
Stanza lxxxix. line 8.

Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.

Though this episode is distinguished by that felicity of expression and neatness of narration so peculiarly characteristic of Ariosto, I cannot think it deserving of all the encomiums which have been bestowed upon it. It is, as I conceive, deficient in that dramatic truth which is equally characteristic of his style, and is generally so well observed by him. What, for instance, can be more extravagant than the conception of the leading incident? We may almost say, that extreme hypocrisy and extreme debauchery are never found together; for there are always some dregs of truth, however muddy, at the bottom of hypocrisy. If this be true, the character of the wife is not in nature; but supposing her character to be in nature, how can we imagine that a husband, who was tied to her apron-string, should never have entertained the least suspicion of her perverse predilection? Is it not yet more extravagant to suppose that this abused husband, who had surprised her in *flagranti delicto*, and who was at first about to kill both her and her paramour, should be seized with such a sudden qualm of morbid sensibility as not even to disturb her slumbers?

The last act of extravagance in this little piece, the return of king and cavalier to the adulteresses, with whom they live very happy ever afterwards, is less out of nature, and is besides justified by its epigrammatic spirit.

On the coarseness and licentiousness which are occasionally found in the Furioso I have commented in another place.

8.

Which 'twixt the river lay
And Celtiberian hills, &c.

Stanza xci. lines 5 and 6.

Che son tra il fiume e 'l Celtibero monte.

The Rhone and the Arragonian hills.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

Isabel makes the paynim take her head,
Rather than he his wicked will should gain;
Who, having his unhappy error read,
Seeks to appease his wounded spirit in vain.
He builds a bridge, and strips those thither led;
But falls from it with Roland the insane;
Who thence, of him regardless, endlong speeds,
And by the road achieves prodigious deeds.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXIX.

I.

O FEEBLE and unstable minds of men!
How quickly our intentions fluctuate!
All thoughts we lightly change, but mostly when
These from some lover's quarrel take their date.
But now, so wroth I saw that Saracen
With woman, so outrageous in his hate,
I weened not only he would ill assuage,
But never more would calm, his amorous rage.

II.

That which he rashly uttered to your blame,
Ye gentle dames, does so my spirit grieve,
Till I his error teach him, to his shame,
He shall no quarter at my hands receive:
So him with pen and page will I proclaim,
That, whosoever reads me, shall believe
He had better held—aye, better bit, his tongue,
Than ever have your sex with slander stung.

III.

But that in this the witless infidel
Spake as a fool, the event demonstrates clear:
Even now, with dagger drawn, that paynim fell
In fury on all women whomsoe'er.
Next him so touched one look of Isabel,
She quickly made his fickle purpose veer;
For her, scarce seen, and to that warrior strange,
He would his Doralice already change;

IV.

And, as new love the king did heat and goad,
He moved some arguments of small avail,
To shake her stedfast spirit, which abode
Wholly with God; but he, her shield and mail,
That hermit, lest she from the better road
Should wander, and her chaste intention fail,
With stronger arguments with him contended,
And still, as best he could, the dame defended.

V.

The king, who long had taxed himself to bear
The monk's bold sermon to his sore displeasure,
And vainly bade him to his cell repair
Anew, without that damsel, at his leisure,
Yet seeing he would still his patience dare,
Nor peace with him would keep, nor any measure,
Upon that preacher's chin his right-hand laid,
And whatsoe'er he grasped, as rudely flayed.

VI.

And (so his fury waxed) that, as it were
With tongs, he griped his neck, and after he
Had whirled him once or twice about in air,
Dismist him from his hand towards the sea.
I say not—know not, what befel him there:
Many the rumours are, and disagree.
One says, ' he burst upon a rock's rude bed,
' And lay one shapeless jelly, heels and head.'

VII.

' He fell into the sea,' by one is said,
' Distant three miles and more; and, in that sound,
' He having prayer, and Ave vainly made,
' Because he knew not how to swim, was drowned.'
Others report, ' a Saint bestowed his aid,
' And dragged him with a visible hand aground.'
Whichever be the reading of this mystery,
Of him I speak no further in mine history.

VIII.

Cruel King Rodomont, when from his side
He had removed the prating eremite,
With visage less disturbed, again applied
To that sad lady, heartless with affright;
And, in the language used by lovers, cried,
' She was his very heart, his life, his light,
' She was his comfort and his dearest hope;'
With all such words as have that common scope.

IX.

And now, so temperate showed that infidel,
'Twould seem that he no violence designed,
The gentle semblance of fair Isabel,
Enamouring him, so tamed his haughty mind;
And, though he might that goodly kernel shell,
The paynim would not pass beyond the rhind,
Who that its flavour would be lost, believed,
Unless 'twere as a gift from her received;

X.

And by degrees so thought to mould the dame
To his desires. She in that lone retreat
And savage, open to his evil aim,
And like a mouse, beneath Grimalkin's feet,
Had liefer found herself i' the midst of flame;
And ever on one thought her fancy beat;
'If any mode, if any way, remained
'To scape that wilful man, untouched, unstained.'

XI.

Sad Isabella in her mind is bent
To slay herself with her own hand, before
The fell barbarian compass his intent;
And be the means to make her wrong so sore
That cavalier, by cruel Fortune spent,
Within her loving arms, to whom she swore
With mind to him devoted, his to be,
Vowing to Heaven perpetual chastity.

XII.

She sees that paynim monarch's passion blind
Increasing still, nor what to do she knows;
Well knows what foul intention is behind,
Which she is all too feeble to oppose:
Yet moving many matters in her mind,
Finds out at last a refuge for her woes,
And means to save her chastity from shame,
(How I shall say) with clear and lasting fame.

XIII.

She cried unto that paynim, foul to see,
Already threatening her with word and act,
And now devoid of all that courtesy,
Which he in the beginning did enact,
" If thou mine honour wilt ensure to me,
" Beyond suspicion, I, upon this pact,
" Will upon thee bestow what shall o'erpay,
" By much, that honour thou wouldst take away.

XIV.

" For pleasure, which endures so brief a space,
" Wherewith this ample world does so o'errun,
" Reject not lightly a perpetual grace,
" A real joy, to be postponed to none.
" Of women everywhere of pleasing face
" A hundred and a thousand may be won;
" But none beside me, or few others, live
" Who can bestow the boon which I can give.

XV.

" I know, and on my way a herb did view,
" And nearly know where I on this could light,
" Which, being boiled with ivy and with rue,
" Over a fire with wood of cypress dight,
" And squeezed, when taken from the caldron, through
" Innocent hands, affords a juice of might,
" Wherewith whoever thrice his body laves,
" Destructive steel or fire securely braves [1].

XVI.

" If thrice therewith he bathe himself, I say,
" His flesh no weapon for a month shall score:
" He once a month must to his body lay
" Mine unction, for its virtue lasts not more:
" This liquor can I make, and will to-day,
" And thou to-day shalt also prove my lore:
" And well, I trust, thou shalt more grateful be,
" Than were all Europe won to-day by thee.

XVII.

" In guerdon for this present, I request
" That thou to me upon thy faith wilt swear,
" Thou never wilt my chastity molest
" In word or deed." So spake that damsel fair;
And Rodomont who heard, again represt
His evil will: for so he longed to bear
A charmed life, that readily he more
Than Isabel of him demanded swore;

XVIII.

And will maintain his promise, till the fact
Vouched of that wondrous water shall appear;
And force himself, meanwhile, to do no act,
To show no sign of violence; but the peer
Resolves he will not after keep the pact,
As one who holds not God or saint in fear;
And to that king, regardless of his oath,
All lying Afric yields in breach of troth [2].

XIX.

Argier's perfidious king to Isabel
More than a thousand times assurance swore,
In case that water rendered him what fell
Achilles and what Cygnus were of yore.
She, aye by beetling cliff and darksome dell,
Away from city and from farm, a store
Of herbs collected, nor this while was e'er
Abandoned by the paynim cavalier.

XX.

When herbs enow by them in many a beat,
With or without their roots, collected were [3],
At a late hour, the twain to their retreat
Betook them; and, throughout night's remnant, there,
That paragon of continence did heat
What simples she had culled, with mickle care,
While to those mysteries and her every deed
The pagan, present still, gave curious heed;

XXI.

Who, wearing out the weary night in sport,
—He and those followers that with him remained—
Had suffered thirst in such a grievous sort,
From the fierce fire in that small cave contained,
That drinking round, in measure full or short,
Of Græcian wine two barrels had they drained;
A booty which those squires who served the Moor,
From travellers seized a day or two before.

XXII.

To Argier's warlike king, unused to wine,
(Cursed, and forbidden by his law, esteemed)
The liquor, tasted once, appeared divine,
Sweeter than nectar or than manna seemed:
He, quaffing largely, now of Ishmael's line
The sober use deserving censure deemed.
So fast their cups with that good wine they fill,
Each reveller's head is whirling like a mill.

XXIII.

Meanwhile that lady from the fire does lift
The pot, wherein she cooked those herbs, and cries
To Rodomont; "In proof I not adrift
"Have launched the words I spake, in random guise,
"—By *that*, which can the truth from falsehood sift,
"Experience, which can make the foolish wise[4],
"Even now the thing shall to thyself be shown,
"Not on another's body, but my own.

XXIV.

" I first will trial make" (that lady said)
" Of this choice liquor with rare virtue blest;
" Lest haply thou shouldst harbour any dread
" That mortal poison from these herbs be prest.
" With this will I anoint myself, from head
" Downwards below the naked neck and breast.
" Then prove on me thy faulchion and thine arm,
" And prove if one can smite, the other harm."

XXV.

She washed, as said, and gladly did decline
Her neck to that unthinking pagan's brand;
Unthinking, and perhaps o'ercome by wine,
Which neither helm, nor mail, nor shield withstand.[5]
That brutish man believed her, and, in sign
Of faith, so struck with cruel steel and hand,
That her fair head, erewhile Love's place of rest,
He severed from the snowy neck and breast.

XXVI.

This made three bounds, and thence in accents clear
Was heard a voice which spake Zerbino's name[6],
To follow whom, escaping Sarza's peer,
So rare a way was taken by the dame.
Spirit! which nobly didst esteem more dear
Thy plighted faith, and chaste and holy name,
(Things hardly known, and foreign to our time,)
Than thine own life and thine own blooming prime!

XXVII.

Depart in peace, O spirit blest and fair!
—So had my verses power! as evermore
I would assay, with all that happy care,
Which so adorns and points poetic lore!
And, as renowned should be thy story rare,
Thousands and thousands of long years and more!
—Depart in peace to radiant realms above,
And leave to earth the example of thy love!

XXVIII.

His eyes from heaven did the Creator bend,
At the stupendous and unequalled feat,
And said; "I thee above that dame commend
"Whose death drove Tarquin from his royal seat;
"And I to register a law intend,
"'Mid those which ages change not as they fleet,
"Which—I attest the inviolable river—
"Unchanged through future times, shall last for ever[7].

XXIX.

"I will that all, in every future age,
"Who bear thy name, be blest with genius high;
"Be courteous, gentle, beautiful, and sage,
"And to the real pitch of honour fly.
"That to their glory the historic page
"They may with worthy argument supply;
"So that for aye Parnassus' hill and well
"Shall ring with Isabel and Isabel."

XXX.

So spake the Sire; and cleared the ambient air,
And hushed beyond its wont the heaving main.
To the third heaven her chaste soul made repair,
And in Zerbino's arms was locked again.
On earth, with shame and sorrow for his share,
That second Breuse sans pity did remain[8];
Who, when digested was the maddening bowl,
Lamented sore his error, sad at soul.

XXXI.

That placated, or in some sort content,
The sainted soul of Isabel might be;
That, if to death that damsel he had shent,
He might at least revive her memory,
He, as a means to compass his intent,
Would turn into a tomb that church, where he
Inhabited, and where she buried lies;
To you shall be related in what wise.

XXXII.

In all parts round about this chosen site,
For love or fear, he master-masons found;
And, making full six thousand men unite,
Stript of their heavy stones the mountains round,
And raised a fabric ninety yards in height,
From its extremest summit to the ground;
And he within its walls the church enclosed;
Wherein entombed the lovers twain reposed.

XXXIII.

This nearly imitates that pile beside
Old Tyber's stream, by Adrian built[9]; and nigh
The sepulchre, will he a tower provide,
Wherein he purposes some time to lie.
A narrow bridge, and only two yards wide,
He flung across the stream which rolled fast by.
Long, but so scanty is that bridge, with pain
The narrow pass two coursers can contain;

XXXIV.

Two coursers, that abreast have thither made,
Or else, encountering, on that causeway meet:
Nor any where was ledge or barricade,
To stay the horse's fall, who lost his feet.
He wills *that* bridge's toll be dearly paid
By Christian or by Moor, who pass his seat;
For with a thousand trophies, arms, and vest,
That damsel's tomb is destined to be drest.

XXXV.

Within ten days, or shorter time, was placed
The bridge, whose arch across the stream was dight;
But not that pile and tower with equal haste
Were so conducted to their destined height.
Yet was the last so high, a sentry paced
Its top, who, whensoever any knight
Approached the bridge, was wont his lord to warn,
Sounding a signal on his bugle-horn.

XXXVI.

Whereat he armed, and issued for the stower,
Now upon *one* and now the *other* side:
For when a warrior pricked towards the tower,
Him from the adverse bank that king defied:
The bridge affords the field their steeds must scour;
And, should one but a little swerve aside,
(Peril unparalleled!) the horse will go
Into the deep and dangerous stream below.

XXXVII.

The pagan had imagined, as a pain,
That, risking oft to tumble in the course,
Head-first into that stream, where he must drain
Huge draughts of water in his fall, parforce,
He would assoil and cleanse him from that stain,
Whereof excess in wine had been the source;
As if what ill wine prompts to do or say,
Water, as well as wine, could wash away.

XXXVIII.

Soon thitherward flocked many a cavalier;
Some who pursued the beaten road and plain;
Since for way-faring men, who southward steer,
No straighter lay for Italy or Spain:
Their courage and their honour, held more dear
Than life, excited others of the train;
And all, where they had hoped the meed of strife,
Had lost their arms, and many arms and life.

XXXIX.

If those he conquers are of pagan strain,
He is content to take their arms and vest:
And of those first arrived the titles plain
Are written, and their arms suspended rest.
But he in prison pens the christened train,
('Twould seem) to be to Argier's realm addrest.
Not yet was brought that building to a head
When thitherward the crazed Orlando sped.

XL.

It chanced Orlando, in his furious mood,
Came thither where that foaming river ran;
Where Rodomont beside the mighty flood
Was hurrying on his work; nor yet were done
The tower and tomb, the bridge, scarce finished, stood:
Here—save his casque was open—Ulien's son*
Steeled cap-a-pee, stood ready armed for fight,
When to the bridge approached Anglantes' knight†.

XLI.

Orlando running thus his wild career,
The barrier tops, and o'er the bridge would fly,
But sullen Rodomont, with troubled cheer,
Afoot, as he that tower is standing nigh,
For he disdains to brandish sword or spear,
Shouts to him from afar with threatening cry,
"Halt! thou intrusive churl and indiscreet,
"Rash, meddling, saucy villain, stay thy feet!

* Rodomont. † Orlando.

XLII.

" Only for lord and cavalier was made,
" And not for thee, dull slave, that bridge was meant."
To this no heed insane Orlando paid,
But, fixt upon his purpose, forward went.
" This madman must I school," the paynim said,
And was approaching with the fell intent
Him into that deep river to dispatch,
Not deeming in such foe to find his match.

XLIII.

This while, a gentle damsel sought the place
That towards that bridge across the river rode,
Richly arraid and beautiful of face,
Who sage reserve in her demeanour showed.
'Tis she that, of her Brandimart in chase,
(If you remember, sir,) through every road
And place her lover seeks in anxious wise,
Excepting Paris, where the warrior lies.

XLIV.

When Flordelice that bridge and tower was near,
(So was by name the wandering damsel hight)
Grappling with Roland stood the Sarzan peer,
And would into that river pitch the knight.
She, conversant with Brava's cavalier,
The miserable county knew aright;
And mighty marvel in that dame it raised
To see him rove, a naked man and crazed.

XLV.

She stopt, the issue of that strife to know,
Wherein those two so puissant warriors vied.
His opposite by might and main to throw,
Into the stream each doughty champion tried.
" How can a fool such mighty prowess show?"
Between his teeth, the furious paynim cried.
And, shifting here and there, was seen to strain,
Brimfull of pride, and anger, and disdain.

XLVI.

This hand and now that other he puts out,
To take new hold, where he his vantage spies;
Now within Roland's legs, and now without,
Locks his right foot or left, in skilful wise;
And thus resembles, in that wrestling bout,
The stupid bear, who in his fury tries
The tree, from whence he tumbled, to o'erthrow;
Deeming it sole occasion of his woe.

XLVII.

Roland, whose better wit was lost withal,
I know not where, and who used force alone;
That utmost force, to which this earthly ball
Haply affords few paragons, or none,
Let himself backwards in that struggle fall,
Embracing as he stood with Ulien's son.
Together in the foaming stream they sank;
High flashed the wave, and groaned the echoing bank.

XLVIII.

Quickly the stream asunder bore the pair.
Roland was naked, and like fish could swim,
Here shot his feet, his arms extended there,
And gained the bank; nor, when upon the brim,
Halted to mark if his adventure were
Achieved with praise or shame: in evil trim,
The pagan, by his arms impeded sore,
With heavier pain and trouble, toiled ashore.

XLIX.

Along the bridge which spanned that foaming tide
Did Flordelice meantime securely pace,
And, having vainly sought on every side
Brandimant's bearing, since nor iron case
Nor vest of his she anywhere espied,
She hoped to find the knight in other place.
But here return we of the count to tell,
Who left behind him stream, bridge, tower, and cell.

L.

'Twere phrensy of his every frantic feat
To promise the relation, one by one;
So many and many,—should I these repeat,
I know not when my story would be done.
Yet some of his notorious deeds, and meet
For mention in my song, will I make known:
Nor will I not that wondrous one recount,
Near Thoulouse, on the Pyrenæan Mount.

LI.

Much country had been traversed by the knight,
Urged by the furious rage which him misguides:
At last he reached the hill whose boundary height
Arragonese and neighbouring Frank divides.
Thither directing aye his course outright,
Where the descending sun his visage hides,
He reached a path upon the rugged steep,
Which overhung a valley dark and deep.

LII.

Here he by chance encountered in mid road
Two youths, that woodmen were, and drove before
An ass along that pathway, with a load
Of logs; they, marking well what scanty store
Of brain in poor Orlando's head was stowed,
Called to the approaching knight, and threatened sore;
Bidding him stand aside, or else go back,
Nor to their hindrance block the common track.

LIII.

To this address Orlando answered nought,
Save that his foot he to their beast applied,
Smote in mid-breast, which, with that vigour fraught,
—That force exceeding every force beside—
Tost him so high, that the beholders thought
It was a bird in air which they descried.
The ass upon a mountain-summit fell,
Which rose above a mile beyond that dell.

LIV.

Upon those youths next sprang the furious knight.
With better luck than wit, one woodman shear
From that tall cliff, twice thirty yards in height,
Cast himself headlong downward in his fear:
Him a moist patch of brambles, in his flight,
Received; and, amid grass and bushes, here,
From other mischief safe, the stripling lit,
And for some scratches in his face was quit.

LV.

That other to a jutting fragment clung,
Who so to gain the higher steep would strive;
Because he hopes, if once those crags among,
To keep him from that fool he may contrive;
But by the feet Orlando, ere he sprung,
Seized him, who will not leave the wretch alive;
And stretching them as wide as he could strain,
So stretched his arms, he rent his prey in twain.

LVI.

Even in such mode as often we descry
Falconer by heron or by pullet do;
Whose entrails he plucks out, to satisfy
Merlin or falcon that the game pursue.
How happy was that other not to die!
Who risqued his neck in that deep bottom, who
Rehearsed the tale so often, Turpin heard,
And handed down to us the wondrous word.

LVII.

These and more marvels does the count, who bends
His steps across that mountain to the plain;
And, seeking long a path, at length descends
Towards the south, upon the land of Spain.
His way along the beach he after wends,
Near Arragon, beside the tumbling main,
And, ever prompted by his phrensy rank,
Will make himself a dwelling on the bank,

LVIII.

Where he somedeal may shun the noontide ray,
With dry and powdery sea-sand covered o'er;
And here, while so employed, upon their way
Arrives Angelica with her Medore,
Who, as you have been told in former lay,
Had from the hills descended on that shore.
Within a yard or less approached the fair,
Ere yet she of his presence was aware.

LIX.

So different from himself was he to sight,
Nought of Orlando she in him surveyed:
For, from the time that rage possest his sprite,
He had gone naked forth in sun and shade.
Had he been born on hot Syene's site,
Or sands where worship is to Ammon paid,
Or nigh those hills, whence Nile's full waters spin,
Orlando had not borne a dingier skin.

LX.

Nigh buried in their sockets are his eyes,
Spare in his visage, and as dry as bone:
Dishevelled is his hair in woeful wise,
With frightful beard his cheek is overgrown:
No sooner is he seen, than backward flies
Angelica, who, trembling sore, is flown:
She shrieking loud, all trembling and dismaid,
Betakes her to her youthful guide for aid.

LXI.

When crazed Orlando was of her aware,
To seize the damsel he upsprang in haste;
So pleased the wretched count her visage fair,
So quickly was his mood inflamed: effaced
In him all ancient recollections are,
How she by him was whilom served and graced.
Behind her speeds the count and hunts that dame,
As questing dog pursues the sylvan game.

LXII.

The youth, that sees him chase his love who fled,
His courser spurs, and in pursuit is gone.
With naked faulchion after him he sped,
And cut and thrust at Roland as he run.
He from his shoulders hoped to cleave his head,
But found the madman's skin as hard as bone;
Yea, harder far than steel, nor to be harmed;
So good Orlando at his birth was charmed.

LXIII.

When on his back Orlando felt him beat,
He turned, and turning on his youthful foe,
Smote with clenched fist, and force which nought can meet,
—Smote on his horse's head, a fearful blow;
And, with skull smashed like glass, that courser fleet
Was by the madman's furious stroke laid low.
In the same breath Orlando turned anew,
And chased the damsel that before him flew.

LXIV.

At speed Angelica impelled her mare,
And whipt and spurred her evermore; whom slow
She would esteem, albeit that palfrey were
Yet faster than a shaft dismist from bow:
Her ring she thought upon, and this the fair
Placed in her mouth; nor failed its virtue now;
For putting it between her lips, like light
Extinguished by a puff, she past from sight.

LXV.

Was it through fear, or was she, while she stript
This from her finger, shaken in her seat;
Or was it rather, that her palfrey tript,
(For neither *this* nor *that* I surely weet)
Angelica, while 'twixt her lips she slipt
The virtuous ring, and hid her visage sweet,
Her stirrups lost; and, tumbling from the sell,
Reversed upon the sand that lady fell.

LXVI.

If but two inches short had fallen his prey,
Upon her would have pounced Orlando near;
Who would have crushed her in his furious way,
But that kind Fortune saved her from the peer.
Let her by other theft herself purvey
With other palfrey, as she did whilere;
For never will she have this courser more,
Who chased by swift Orlando scours the shore.

LXVII.

Doubt not that she another will provide;
And follow we in mad Orlando's rear;
Whose rage and fury nevermore subside,
Wroth that Angelica should disappear:
After that beast along the sands he hied,
Aye gaining on the mare in this career.
Now, now he touches her, and lo! the mane
He grasps, and now secures her by the rein.

LXVIII.

Orlando seizes her with that delight
That other man might seize a damsel fair;
The bit and bridle he adjusts aright,
Springs on her back, and o'er that sea-beach bare
For many miles impels the palfrey's flight,
Without repose or pause, now here, now there:
Nor ever sell or bridle be displaced,
Nor let her grass or heartening forage taste.

LXIX.

As in this course to o'erleap a ditch he sought,
Head over heels, she with her rider went:
Nor harmed was he, nor felt that tumble aught;
But she, with shoulder slipt, lay foully shent.
Long how to bear her thence Orlando thought,
And in the end upon his shoulders hent.
He from the bottom climbed, thus loaded sore,
And carried her three bow-shots' length and more.

LXX.

Next, for he felt that weight too irksome grow,
He put her down, to lead her by the rein;
Who followed him with limping gait and slow.
"Come on," Orlando cried, and cried in vain;
And, could the palfrey at a gallop go,
This ill would satisfy his mood insane.
The halter from her head he last unloosed,
Wherewith her hind off-foot the madman noosed.

LXXI.

'Tis thus he comforts and drags on that mare,
That she may follow with more ease, so led;
Who whiles despoiled of flesh, and whiles of hair,
Is scathed by stones which that ill road o'erspread:
At length the misused beast, with wear and tear
Of the rude rocks, and suffering sore, lies dead.
Orlando nought the slaughtered mare regards,
Nor anywise his headlong course retards.

LXXII.

To drag that palfrey ceased he not, though dead,
Continuing still his course towards the west,
And all this while sacked hamlet, farm, and stead,
Whenever he by hunger was distrest;
And aye to glut himself with meat, and bread,
And fruit, he every one by force opprest.
One by his hand was slain, one foully shent;
Seldom he stopt, and ever onward went.

LXXIII.

As much, or little less, would do the knight
By his own love, did not that damsel hide;
Because the wretch discerns not black from white,
And harms where he would help. A curse betide
The wonder-working ring, and eke the wight
Who gave it to that lady, full of pride!
Since Roland, but for this, would venge the scorn
He and a thousand more from her had borne.

LXXIV.

Would that of her Orlando were possest,
And of all women that are above ground!
For one and all are ingrates at the best,
Nor is in all an ounce of goodness found.
But it is meet I let my hearer rest
Ere my strained chords return a faltering sound,
And that he may less tedious deem the rhyme,
Defer my story till another time.

NOTES TO CANTO XXIX.

1.

Wherewith whoever thrice his body laves,
Destructive steel or fire securely braves.
" Stanza xv. lines 7 and 8.

That there are some preparations which for a time secure the skin from fire there is no doubt, and we cannot much wonder it should have been believed in a more ignorant age, that what preserved from one danger would preserve from another. In Constantinople, where things have remained (as has been before said) much in the same state as they were in Christendom down to the fifteenth century, a frequent exhibition takes place of dervishes who handle red hot irons with impunity; and every now and then we have some chance performer upon the same strange instruments at home.

In these performances there may be some trick, as in the apparent swallowing of molten lead, which is probably some other composite metal capable of fusion by an inferior degree of heat, a thing which is sometimes witnessed in the partial dissolution of an ale-house tea-spoon in a hot cup of tea: but making every reasonable allowance for deception, no one can doubt the main fact, who has witnessed these performances, which certainly offer a reasonable ground for believing that all the strange tricks of natural magic which we read of in works

of the middle ages were not such mere *hocus pocus* as our modern natural philosophers would persuade us; and the thing on which I have been commenting may show how oddly secrets may be preserved among the ignorant, which elude all the researches of the educated. For I never knew of any one of these having discovered the *arcanum* in question; and the only trial of this kind which I ever heard of, and which was made upon his scholars by a Venetian schoolmaster (yet alive), was not of a nature to encourage future experiments. There are, however, (I am told) receipts for preservatives from fire, given in Baptista Porta's *Magia Naturalis*, of which there is (I believe) an old English version; but I have never seen either the translation or the original.

2.

All lying Afric, &c.

Stanza xviii. line 8.

Punica Fides.

3.

When herbs enow by them in many a beat,
With or without their roots, collected were.

Stanza xx. lines 1 and 2.

An Italian commentator attacks Ariosto for having first stated that one nameless herb, boiled with rue and ivy, was sufficient for Isabella's purpose, and then for making her collect many others for this magic bath. As in a former case, I should not have thought the criticism worth notice, if the circumstance did not illustrate a fact in the history of manners, or rather of art. In the earlier ages of Europe, all composers of medicine dealt largely in compound drugs, and never used that on which they most relied without other auxiliary ingredients. The great improvers of medicine were inclined to treat this complication of remedies as an imposture.

But better experience seems to prove that our ancestors were right in the principle, however inefficient or erroneous may have been their practice. For it is now well ascertained that the happy union of drugs is one of the most useful points of medicine; and that even preparations of the same ingredient which offend when taken separately, will sometimes produce a beneficial effect when administered in combination.

4.

Experience, which can make the foolish wise.

Stanza xxiii. line 6.

"Experientia stultorum magistra."

5.

Which neither helm, nor mail, nor shield withstand.

Stanza xxv. line 4.

In the original,

Incontro a cui non vale elmo ne scudo.

Petrarch says, with another application,

Contro le quai non vale elmo ne scudo.

6.

This made three bounds, and thence in accents clear
Was heard a voice which spake Zerbino's name, &c.

Stanza xxvi. lines 1 and 2.

Ariosto's best excuse for such an extravagance is, I believe, Homer's example in the death of Dolon; and for Homer it may be said, that it is perhaps the only departure from physical truth in his admirable poems.

7.

Which—I attest the inviolable river—
Unchanged through future times, shall last for ever.
Stanza xxviii. lines 7 and 8.

The English reader can only find some palliation for this passage in the spirit of Ariosto's age and country. As a specimen indeed of the different feeling with which his countrymen have contemplated it, it is enough to translate literally the note of one who has furnished many observations upon the *Furioso*, not worse than those of other critics. "The poet" (says he) "uses the oath which the Gentiles put into the mouths of their Gods, in making them swear by the waters of Styx; an oath, which was held by them as inviolable. Ariosto *poetically* puts this into the mouth of the true God, to show the unalterable firmness of his purpose!"

Putting aside these indefensible scandals, it is to be observed that Ariosto too often loses himself when he touches the dangerous chord of compliment; but I can say with truth, that after a long and close consideration of the *Furioso*, I am convinced little could safely be abridged in this extraordinary poem besides these complimentary effusions. Every thing else has its use, and is conducive to some dramatic, if not poetical, effect. After being long afraid of proclaiming so bold a conclusion, I have derived great confidence from finding that such was the opinion of the late Mr. Fox, who used to contend that there was no such thing as an episode in the *Furioso;* and in the proper estimation of the term he is undoubtedly right, for nothing can be left out or altered, without injury to some other piece of the machinery. This may be extravagant and fantastical, but it is fitted to its ends and coherent in all its varieties.

8.

That second Brense sans pity did remain.
Stanza xxx. line 6.

A ferocious knight, one of the *dramatis personæ* in the *Mort Arthur*.

9.

This nearly imitates that pile beside
Old Tyber's stream, by Adrian built.
Stanza xxxiii. lines 1 and 2.

Now called the Castle of Saint Angelo.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

Great feats achieves Orlando by the way.
The Tartar king is by Rogero slain:
For whom fair Bradamant, his spouse, does stay,
And, him expecting, suffers cruel pain.
But Fate forbade, that he who wounded lay
To her his plighted promise should maintain.
He after boldly with the brethren made,
Their lord Rinaldo in his need to aid.

THE ORLANDO FURIOSO.

CANTO XXX.

I.

When Reason, giving way to heat of blood,
Herself from hasty choler ill defends,
And, hurried on by blind and furious mood,
We with the tongue or hand molest our friends,
Though the offence is, after, wept and rued,
The penance which we pay is poor amends.
Alas! I sorrow and lament in vain
For what I said in other angry strain.

II.

But like sick man am I, who, sore bested,
Suffering with patience many and many a day,
When against pain he can no more make head,
Yields to his rage, and curses; pain gives way,
And with it the impetuous wrath is fled,
Which moved his ready tongue such ill to say;
And he is left his wilful rage to rue,
But cannot that which he has done undo.

III.

Well hope I, from your sovereign courtesy,
Your pardon, since I crave it, ladies bright;
You will excuse, if moved by madness, I
Rave in my passion; let your censure light
On foe, who treats me so despiteously,
I could not be reduced to worser plight;
Who prompts what sore repents me: Heaven above
Knows how she wrongs me, knows how well I love.

IV.

No less beside myself than Brava's peer *
Am I, nor less my pardon should obtain;
He, who by mead or mountain, far or near,
Had scowered large portion of the land of Spain,
Dragging that jennet in his wild career,
Dead as she was, behind him by the rein;
But, where a river joined the sea, parforce
Abandoned on the bank her mangled corse.

V.

And he, who could like any otter swim,
Leapt in and rose upon the further side.
Behold! a mounted shepherd at the brim
Arrived, his horse to water in the tide;
Nor when he saw Orlando coming, him
Eschewed, whom naked and alone he spied.
—"My jennet for thy hackney were I fain
"To barter," cried the madman to the swain:—

* Orlando.

VI.

" Her will I show thee, if thou wilt; who dead
" Upon the river's other margin fell;
" At leisure may'st thou have her cured," (he said)
" And of no other fault have I to tell.
" Give me thy hackney, with some boot instead:
" Prythee, dismount thee, for he likes me well."
The peasant, laughing, answered not a word,
But left the fool and pricked towards the ford.

VII.

" Hearest thou not? hola! I want thy steed,"
(Cried Roland) and advanced with wrathful cheer.
A solid staff and knotted, for his need,
That shepherd had, wherewith he smote the peer;
Whose violence and ire all bounds exceed,
Who seems withal to wax more fierce than e'er:
A cuff he levels at that rustic's head,
And splits the solid bone, and lays him dead.

VIII.

Then leaping on his horse, by different way
The country scowers, to make more spoil and wrack:
That palfrey never more tastes corn or hay;
So that few days exhaust the famished hack.
But not afoot does fierce Orlando stray,
Who will not, while he lives, conveyance lack.
As many as he finds, so many steeds
—Their masters slain—he presses for his needs.

IX.

He came at last to Malaga, and here
Did mightier scathe than he had done elsewhere;
For now—besides that the infuriate peer
Of all its people left the country bare,
Nor (such the ravage) could another year
The desperate havoc of the fool repair—
So many houses burnt he, or cast down,
Sacked was a third of that unhappy town.

X.

Departing thence, insane Orlando flees
To Zizera, a seaward town, whose site
Is in Gibraltar's bay, or (if you please)
Say Gibletàr's[1]; for either way 'tis hight;
Here, loosening from the land, a boat he sees
Filled with a party, and for pleasure dight:
Which, for their solace, to the morning gale,
Upon that summer sea, had spread their sail.

XI.

"Hoah! the boat! put back!" the count 'gan cry,
Who was in mind to go aboard their barge:
But vainly on their ears his clamours die;
For of such freight none willingly take charge.
As swiftly as a swallow cleaves the sky,
Furrowing the foamy wave the boat goes large.
Orlando urges on, with straightening knee,
And whip and spur, his horse towards the sea.

XII.

He plunged into the waves, at last, parforce;
For vainly would he shun the waters green.
Bathed are knees, paunch, and croup, till of that horse
Scarcely the head above the wave is seen:
Let him not hope to measure back his course,
While smitten with the whip his ears between.
Woe worth him! he must founder by the way,
Or into Africa his load convey.

XIII.

Nor poops nor prows does Roland more descry,
For all have launched their shallops, which are wide
Of that dry shore; while from his level eye
Their hulls the tall and shifting surges hide.
He spurs his horse amid the billows high,
Wholly resolved to reach the farther side.
The courser ends his swim and life in fine,
Drained of his strength, and drenched brimfull of brine.

XIV.

He sinks, and would with him draw down his load;
But that himself the madman's arms upbear:
With sinewy arms and either palm he rowed,
And puffed and blew the brine before; the air,
Breathed softly, and the water gently flowed;
And well was needed weather more than fair:
For if the waters yet a little rise,
Whelmed by the waxing tide Orlando dies.

XV.

But Fortune, that of madmen is the guide,
Him from the water drew near Ceuta's shore,
Upon that beach, and of those walls as wide
As twice an archer's hand could shoot at score.
For many days along the bank he hied,
At hazard, ever westward hurrying sore,
Until he came where on the sea-beat strand
Encamped a host of blacks, a countless band.

XVI.

Leave we the paladin at will to stray!
To speak of him occasion will come round.
—Sir, what befel the lady of Catày,
Who scaped, in time, from him of wit unsound,
And afterwards, upon her homeward way,
Was with good bark and better weather bound;
And how she made Medoro, India's king;
Perchance some voice in happier verse may sing.

XVII.

To say so many things I am intent,
I mean not to pursue the cavalier.
To Mandricardo my fair argument
It now behoves me, in his turn, to veer
He happily enjoyed, his rival spent,
The beauty, left in Europe without peer,
Since fair Angelica from hence had wended,
And virtuous Isabel to heaven ascended.

XVIII.

King Mandricardo, proud that in his right
His lady had adjudged the amorous suit,
Enjoys not her award with full delight;
Since others with him other points dispute.
By young Rogero claimed, that eagle white
Of one disastrous quarrel is the root;
Another moves the King of Sericana
Against the Tartar king, for Durindana.

XIX.

Agramant and Marsilius strive in vain,
With labour sore, this tangle to undo[3];
Nor only cannot they persuade the twain
In peace and concord to unite anew,
But cannot make the valiant Child refrain
From claiming Hector's buckler as his due;
Nor yet Gradasso move the sword to lend,
Till *this*, or till *that*, quarrel have an end.

XX.

Rogero brooks not that in other fight
His shield be braced, nor will Gradasso bear
That save against himself the Tartar knight
Should wield the sword Orlando used to wear.
" See we, in fine, on whom the chance will light"
" (Cries Agramant) and further words forbear."
" How Fortune rules the matter let us see,
" And choose him that of her shall chosen be."

XXI.

" And—would ye do what most would me delight,
" And be an obligation evermore—
" You shall by casting lots decide your right:
" Premising, he whose lot is drawn before
" The other, shall upon two quarrels fight:
" So he who wins, on his companion's score
" Shall win as well as on his own; and who
" Loses the battle lose alike for two.

XXII.

" Between Rogero and Gradasso, we
" Deem there is little difference, rather none;
" And wot whichever shall elected be,
" In arms will make his martial prowess known.
" As for the rest, let doubtful victory
" Descend on him whom Heaven is pleased to own!
" Upon the vanquished knight no blame shall fall,
" But we to Fortune will impute it all."

XXIII.

Rogero and Gradasso, at this say
Of Agramant, stood silent, and agreed,
That he whose lot first issued, the assay
Should undertake for both in listed mead.
Thus in two scrolls, inscribed in the same way,
Their names are writ as destined to succeed.
These afterwards are cast into an urn,
Which much they shake and topsy turvy turn.

XXIV.

A seely boy then dipt his hand and drew
A billet from the vase, and it befel,
Thereon Rogero's name the assistants knew;
—Gradasso's left behind—I cannot tell
How joyed renowned Rogero at the view,
And can as little say what sorrow fell
Upon Gradasso, on the other side;
But he parforce his fortune must abide.

XXV.

Gradasso every thought and every deed
Employs, Rogero to instruct and aid,
That in the strife his champion may succeed;
And teaches every sleight he has assaid:
—How best to manage sword and shield at need—
—What strokes are feints, and what with vantage made—
And when he should tempt Fortune, when eschew—
Reminds him, one by one, in long review.

XXVI.

After the drawing lots and king's award,
What of that day remained the champions spent
As wont, in giving tokens of regard,
To this or to that other warrior sent.
The people, greedy for the fight, toward
The field is gone, and many not content
With wending thither ere the dawn of light,
Upon the place of combat watch all night.

XXVII.

The foolish rabble anxiously attends
Those goodly champions' contest for the prize,
A crowd which neither sees nor comprehends
Other than that which is before its eyes.
But they who know what boots and what offends,
—Marsilius and Sobrino, and the wise—
Censure the fight, and monarch that affords
A field of combat to those martial lords.

XXVIII.

Nor, 'what a heavy loss he would sustain'
(Cease they to royal Agramant to read)
'Were Mandricardo or Rogero slain;
'A thing by cruel Destiny decreed.
'Since they, to combat against Charlemagne,
'Of one of these alone have greater need
'Than of ten thousand more, amid which crew
'They scarce would find one champion good and true.'

XXIX.

Agramant recognized this truth; but thought
That ill his royal word could be repealed;
Yet Mandricardo and the Child besought
'That they the right, conferred by him, would yield:
'More; that the question was a thing of nought,
'Nor worthy to be tried in martial field;
'And prayed them—would they not obey his hest
'At least somewhile, to let their quarrel rest.

XXX.

'Five or six months would they the strife delay,
'Or more or less, till Charles defeated were,
'And stript of mantle, crown, and royal sway.'
But each, though he would willingly forbear,
And much desired his sovereign to obey,
Stood out against the Moorish monarch's prayer:
Since either deemed *he* would be foully shent
Who to this treaty first should yield consent.

XXXI.

But more than king, than all, who sought in vain
To soften Agrican's infuriate son,
The beauteous daughter of King Stordilane
Lamented, and besought him, woe-begone,
Besought him he would do what all would fain
Behold by the relenting warrior done;
—Lamented her, as through the cavalier,
For ever kept in agony and fear.

XXXII.

"Alas! and what (exclaims she) can I find
"Which may avail to minister repose,
"If aye, by this or that desire inclined,
"You don your harness to affront new foes?
"What boots it to restore my harassed mind
"That I behold one fearful quarrel's close,
"Against one champion moved for love of me,
"If one as fierce already kindled be?

XXXIII.

" Woe worth me! I was proud, with little right,
" So good a king, so stout a cavalier
" For me should in the fierce and dangerous fight
" Peril his life, who now, I see too clear,
" Upon a ground of strife so passing light,
" With the same risk prepares to couch the spear.
" You, more than love for me, to strife impels
" The natural rage, wherewith your bosom swells.

XXXIV.

" But if the love you force yourself to show,
" Be in good earnest, that which you profess,
" By this I pray you, by that chastening woe
" Which does my spirit, does my heart oppress,
" Be not concerned, because the bird of snow
" Rogero, pictured on his shield, possess.
" I know not wherefore you should joy or grieve
" That he the blazoned buckler bear or leave.

XXXV.

" Much evil may ensue and little gain
" Out of the battle you to wage prepare;
" Small guerdon will be bought with mickle pain
" If from Rogero you his eagle bear;
" But if your fortune shifts on listed plain,
" She whom you hold not captive by her hair,
" You cause an evil with such mischief fraught,
" My heart is broken at the simple thought.

XXXVI.

" If of small value life to you appear,
" And you esteem a painted bird more high,
" At least for my life's sake esteem yours dear;
" For one without the other shall not die.
" With you to die excites in me no fear;
" With you, prepared for life or death am I:
" Yet would I fain not die so ill content,
" As I should die if you before me went."

XXXVII.

Accompanying words with tears and sighs,
In such, or such like speech she him did pray,
Throughout that livelong night, in piteous wise,
Hoping her lover's anger to allay;
And Mandricardo, sucking from her eyes
Those sweet tears[4], glittering in their humid ray,
And that sweet moan, from lips more deeply dyed
Than crimson rose, himself in tears, replied.

XXXVIII.

" Alack! my dearest life! take thou no dread,
" Alack! for love of Heaven! of thing so light:
" For if (to my sole harm) with banners spread,
" Their following of the Frank or paynim rite
" King Agramant and Charles united led,
" This need not cause you matter for affright.
" What poor account you make of me is clear
" If this one, sole, Rogero breeds such fear.

XXXIX.

" And yet should you remember how alone
" (Nor had I scimetar or sword in hand)
" Of knights, with a spear's truncheon overthrown,
" I singly cleared the field, an armed band.
" Though to his shame and sorrow this he own,
" Gradasso tells to them who make demand,
" He was my prisoner in the Syrian tower[5]:
" Yet other than Rogero's is his power.

XL.

" Not King Gradasso will the truth deny:
" Sacripant knows it and your Isolier[6]:
" I say King Sacripant of Circassy,
" And Aquilant, and Gryphon, famous peer;
" With hundreds—yea and more—from far and nigh
" Made prisoners at that fearful pass whilere,
" Baptized or Infidel; and all by me
" From prison on the selfsame day set free.

XLI.

" And even yet they marvel evermore
" At the great feat which I performed that day;
" Greater than if the squadrons of the Moor
" And Frank united I had held at bay;
" And shall Rogero, new to martial lore,
" Me, one to one, with scathe or scorn appay?
" And me shall now this young Rogero scare,
" When Hector's sword and Hector's arms I wear?

XLII.

" Ah! as I might have won you from my foe,
" Why did I not for you in arms contend?
" I so had then my valour shown, I know,
" You would have well foreseen Rogero's end.
" For heaven's sake dry your tears, nor by such woe
" —An evil omen for my arms—offend;
" And learn, 'tis Honour pricks me to the field,
" And not an argent bird and blazoned shield."

XLIII.

So said he; and with reasons passing good
To him that dame replied, with saddest face;
Nor only would have changed his sullen mood,
But would have moved a pillar from its place.
She would the champion quickly have subdued,
Though she was gowned, he locked in iron case;
And make him satisfy the Moorish lord,
If Agramant spake further of accord;

XLIV.

And had; but that Aurora—on his way
Ushering aye the sun—no sooner stirred,
Than young Rogero, anxious to display
That rightfully he bore Jove's beauteous bird,
To cut the quarrel short, and lest delay
Be further interposed, in act or word,
Where round the palisade the people close,
Appears in armour and his bugle blows.

XLV.

When that loud sound is by the Tartar heard,
Which the proud warrior to the strife defies,
No more of treaty will he hear a word:
From bed upspringing, 'Arms,' the monarch cries,
And shows a visage with such fury stirred,
Doralice dares no longer peace advise,
Nor speak of treaty or of truce anew;
And now parforce the battle must ensue.

XLVI.

The Tartar arms himself in haste; with pain
The wonted service of his squires he tarries:
This done, he springs upon the steed amain,
Erewhile the champion's who defended Paris*;
And him with speed towards the listed plain,
Fixt for that fierce assay, the courser carries.
Even then the king and barons thither made,
So that the strife was little time delaid.

XLVII.

Put on and laced the shining helmets were,
And given to either champion was the spear:
Quickly the trumpet's blast was heard in air,
Whose signal blanched a thousand cheeks with fear.
Levelled those cavaliers their lances bear,
Spurring their warlike steeds to the career,
And, in mid champaign, meet with such a shock,
That Earth appears to rive and Heaven to rock.

* Orlando.

XLVIII.

From this side and from that, the eagle flew,
Which Jove in air was wonted to sustain;
So hurtled, but with plumes of different hue,
Those others often on Thessalian plain [7].
The beamy lances, rested by the two,
Well warranted the warriors' might and main,
And worse than that encounter had withstood:
So towers resist the wind, so rocks the flood.

XLIX.

As Turpin truly writes, into the sky
Upwent the splinters, broke in the career;
For two or three fell flaming from on high,
Which had ascended to the starry sphere [8].
The knights unsheathed their faulchions from the thigh,
And, like those who were little moved by fear,
For new encounter wheeled, and, man to man,
Pointing at one another's vizor ran.

L.

They, pointing at the vizors' sight, attacked,
Nor with their faulchions at the steeds took aim,
Each other to unhorse, unseemly act!
Since in that quarrel they are nought to blâme.
Those err, nor know the usage, who by pact
Deem they were bound their horses not to maim:
Without pact made, 'twas reckoned a misdeed,
And an eternal blot to smite a steed.

LI.

They level at the vizor, which is double,
And yet resists such mighty blows with pain.
The champions evermore their strokes redouble
Faster than pattering hail, which mars the grain,
And bruises branch and leaf, and stalk and stubble,
And cheats the hopes of the expecting swain.
To you is known the force of either brand,
And known the force of either warrior's hand.

LII.

But yet no stroke well worthy of their might
Those peers have dealt, so cautious are the twain.
The Tartar's faulchion was the first to bite,
By which was good Rogero well nigh slain.
By one of those fell blows which either knight
So well could plant, his shield was cleft in twain;
Beneath, his cuirass opened to the stroke,
And to the quick the cruel weapon broke.

LIII.

The assistants' hearts were frozen at the blow,
So did Rogero's danger them appal,
On whom the many's favor, well they know,
And wishes rest, if not of one and all.
And then (had Fortune ordered matters so,
As the most part desired they should befall)
Taken had been the Tartar king or slain;
So had that blow offended all the train.

LIV.

I think that blow was by some angel stayed,
To save Rogero from the mischief near:
Yet at the king (nor answer he delayed)
He dealt a stroke more terrible than e'er.
At Mandricardo's head he aims his blade,
But such the fury of the cavalier,
And such his haste, he less my blame deserves,
If slanting from the mark his faulchion swerves.

LV.

Had Balisarda smote him full, though crowned
With Hector's helm, the enchantment had been vain[9].
So reels the Tartar, by that stroke astound,
He from the bridle-hand lets go the rein:
Thrice with his head he threats to smite the ground,
While his unguided courser scowers the plain;
That Brigliadoro, whom by name you know,
Yet, for his change of master, full of woe.

LVI.

Never raged trampled serpent, never so
Raged wounded lion, as in fell despite
Raged Mandricardo, rallying from that blow,
Which had deprived of sense the astonied knight;
And as his pride and fury waxes, grow
As much, yea more, his valour and his might.
He at Rogero makes his courser vault,
With sword uplifted high for the assault.

LVII.

Poised in his stirrups stood the Tartar lord,
And aiming at his foeman's casque, believed
He with the stroke of his descending sword
Rogero to the bosom should have cleaved;
But from that youth, yet quicker in his ward,
A wound beneath his arm the king received,
Which made wide daylight in the stubborn mail,
That clothed the better armpit with its scale.

LVIII.

Rogero drawing Balisarda back,
Out sprang the tepid blood of crimson stain;
Hence Mandricardo's arm did vigour lack,
And with less dint descended Durindane:
Yet on the croup the stripling tumbled back,
Closing his eyelids, through excess of pain;
And memorable aye had been that blow,
Had a worse helmet clothed the warrior's brow.

LIX.

For this he pauses not, but spurs amain,
And Mandricardo smites in the right side.
Here little boots the texture of the chain,
And the well wealded metal's temper tried,
Against that sword, which never falls in vain,
Which was enchanted to no end beside,
But that against it nothing should avail,
Enchanted corselet or enchanted mail.

LX.

Whate'er that sword takes-in it shears outright,
And in the Tartar's side inflicts a wound:
He curses Heaven and raves in such despite,
Less horribly the boisterous billows sound.
He now prepares to put forth all his might:
The shield, with argent bird and azure ground,
He hurls, with rage transported, from his hand,
And grasps with right and left his trenchant brand.

LXI.

" Marry," (Rogero cried,) " it needs no more
" To prove your title to that ensign vain,
" Which now you cast away, and cleft before [10];
" Nor can you more your right in it maintain."
So saying, he parforce must prove how sore
The danger and the dint of Durindane;
Which smites his front, and with such weight withal,
A mountain lighter than that sword would fall.

LXII.

It cleft his vizor through the midst; 'twas well
That from the sight diverged the trenchant blade,
Which on the saddle's plated pommel fell;
Nor yet its double steel the faulchion stayed:
It reached his armour (like soft wax, the shell
Oped, and the skirts wherewith 'twas overlaid)
And trenched upon his thigh a grievous wound;
So that 'twas long ere he again waxed sound.

LXIII.

The spouting blood of either cavalier
Their arms had crimsoned in a double drain:
Hence diversly the people guessed, which peer
Would have the better of the warlike twain:
But soon Rogero made the matter clear
With that keen sword, so many a champion's bane:
With this he at that part in fury past
Whence Mandricardo had his buckler cast.

LXIV.

He the left side of his good cuirass gored,
And found a passage to the heart below;
Which a full palm above the flank he bored;
So that parforce the Tartar must forego
His every title to the famous sword,
The blazoned buckler, and its bird of snow,
And yield, together with these seeds of strife,
—Dearer than sword and shield—his precious life.

LXV.

Not unavenged the unhappy monarch dies;
For in the very moment he is smit,
The sword—for little period his—he plies,
And good Rogero's vizor would have split:
But that he stopt the stroke in wary wise,
And broke its force and vigour ere it lit;
Its force and vigour broke: for he, below
The better arm, first smote his Tartar foe.

LXVI.

Smit was the Child by Mandricardo's hand,
At the same moment he that monarch slew:
He, albeit thick, divides an iron band
And good steel cap beneath it; inches two,
Lies buried in the head the trenchant brand,
The solid bone and sinew severed through.
Astound Rogero fell, on earth reversed,
And from his head a stream of life-blood burst.

LXVII.

Rogero was the first who went to ground,
And so much longer did the king delay,
Nigh every one of those who waited round
Weened he the prize and vaunt had borne away.
So erred his Doralice, that oft was drowned
In tears, and often clad in smiles that day:
She thanked her God, with hands to Heaven extended,
That in such wise the fearful fight had ended.

LXVIII.

But when by tokens manifest appear
The live man living and the dead man slain,
The favourers of those knights, with change of cheer,
Some weep and some rejoice, an altered train.
King, lord, and every worthiest cavalier
Crowd round Rogero, who has risen with pain.
Him to embrace and gratulate they wend,
And do him grace and honour without end.

LXIX.

Each with Rogero is rejoiced, and feels
That which he utters in his heart; among
The crowd the Sericane alone conceals
Other than what he vouches with his tongue.
He pleasure in his countenance reveals,
With envy at the conquest inly stung;
And—were his destiny or chance to blame—
Curses whiche'er produced Rogero's name.

LXX.

What of Rogero's favour can be said?
What of caresses, many, true, and kind,
From Agramant? that not without his aid
Would have unrolled his ensigns to the wind;
Who had to move from Africk been afraid,
Nor would have trusted in his host combined.
He, now King Mandricardo is no more,
Esteems him the united world before.

LXXI.

Nor to Rogero lean the men alone;
To him incline as well the female train,
Who for the land of France had left their own,
Amid the troops of Africk or of Spain;
And Doralice, herself, although she moan,
And for her lover, cold and pale, complain,
Save by the griding curb of shame represt,
Her voice, perchance, had added to the rest.

LXXII.

I say perchance, nor warrant it I dare,
Albeit the thing may easily be true;
For such his manners, such his merits are,
So beauteous is Rogero's form to view,
She (from experience we are well aware)
So prone to follow whatsoe'er is new,
That not to play the widow's lovelorn part,
She on Rogero well might set her heart.

LXXIII.

Though he did well alive, what could be done
With Mandricardo, after he was dead?
'Tis fitting she provide herself with one
That her, by night or day, may bravely stead.
Meanwhile to young Rogèro's succour run
The king's physician in his art best read;
Who, having seen the fruits of that fell strife,
Already has ensured Rogero's life.

LXXIV.

Agramant bids them diligently lay
The wounded warrior in his tent, and there
Is evermore beside him, night and day;
Him with such love he watches, with such care:
To his bed the Tartar's arms and buckler gay,
So bade the Moorish king, suspended were;
Suspended all, save trenchant Durindana,
Relinquished to the King of Sericana.

LXXV.

With Mandricardo's arms, his other weed
Was to Rogero given, and given with these
Was warlike Brigliador, whom on the mead
Orlando left, distraught with his disease.
To Agramant Rogero gave the steed,
Well knowing how that goodly gift would please.
No more of this: parforce my strain returns
To her that vainly for Rogero burns.

LXXVI.

Bradamant's torment have I to recount,
While for the courier damsel she did stay:
With tidings of her love to Alban's Mount,
To her Hippalca measured back her way:
She of Frontino first and Rodomont,
And next of good Rogero had to say;
'How to the fount anew he had addrest
'His way, with Richardetto and the rest;

LXXVII.

'And how the Child, in rescue of the steed,
'Had gone with her to find the paynim rude;
'And weened to have chastized his foul misdeed,
'That from a woman took Frontino good.
'And how the youth's design did ill succeed,
'Because the king had other way pursued.
'The reason too why to Mount Alban's hold
'Rogero had not come, at full she told;

LXXVIII.

'And fully she to Bradamant exprest
'What to excuse himself Rogero said:'
She after drew the letter from her breast,
Wherewith entrusted she had thither sped:
With visage which more care than hope confest,
The paper Bradamant received and read;
Which, but that she expected to have seen
Rogero's self, more welcome would have been.

LXXIX.

To find herself with written scroll appaid
In good Rogero's place, whom she attends,
Marred her fair visage; which such fear pourtrayed,
Despite and sorrow as her bosom rends.
Ten times the page she kisses, while the maid
As oft to him who writes her heart commends:
The tears alone which trickle from her eyes
Keep it from kindling at her burning sighs.

LXXX.

Four times, nay six, she that epistle read,
And willed moreover that as many more
The message by that damsel should be said,
Who word and letter to Mount Alban bore.
This while unceasing tears the lady shed,
Nor, I believe, would ever have given o'er,
Save by the hope consoled, that she anew
Should briefly her beloved Rogero view.

LXXXI.

Rogero's word was pledged for his return
When fifteen days or twenty were gone by:
So had he after to Hippalca sworn,
Bidding her boldly on his faith rely.
" From accidents that chance at every turn"
(Cried Bradamant) " what warranty have I,
" Alas!—and such are commonest in war—
" That none the knight's return for ever bar?

LXXXII.

" Alas! alas! Rogero, that above
" Myself hast evermore been prized by me,
" Who would have thought thou more than me could'st love
" Any, and most thy mortal enemy?
" Thou helpest where to punish would behove,
" And harm'st where thou should'st help; nor do I see
" If thou as worthy praise or blame regard
" Such tardiness to punish and reward.

LXXXIII.

" I know not if thou knowest—the stones know—
" How by Troyano was thy father slain;
" And yet Troyano's son, against his foe,
" Thou would'st defend, and keep from harm or stain
" Such vengeance upon him do'st thou bestow?
" And do his vengers, as their meed obtain,
" That I, descended of this stock, should be
" The martyr of thy mortal cruelty?"

LXXXIV.

To her Rogero, in his absence, said
The lady these sad words, and more beside,
Lamenting aye; while her attendant maid
Not once alone, but often, certified
'The stripling would observe his faith, and prayed
'Her—who could do no better—to abide
'The Child's arrival till the time came round
'When he by promise to return was bound.'

LXXXV.

The comfort that Hippalca's words convey,
And Hope, companion of the loving train,
Bradamant's fear and sorrow so allay,
That she enjoys some respite from her pain:
This moves her in Mount Alban's keep to stay;
Nor ever thence that lady stirred again
Until the day, that day the youthful knight
Had fixt, who ill observed his promise plight.

LXXXVI.

But in that he his promise ill maintained,
No blame upon Rogero should be cast;
Him one or other cause so long detained,
The appointed time perforce he overpast:
On a sick bed, long time, he, sorely pained,
Was laid, wherein a month or more he past
In doubt of death; so deeply him had gored
Erewhile in fight the Tartar monarch's sword.

LXXXVII.

Him on the day prefixed the maid attended,
Nor other tidings of the youth had read,
But those he through Hippalca had commended,
And that which after Richardetto said;
Who told, 'how him Rogero had defended,
'And freed the captive pair * to prison led.'
The tidings, overjoyed, she hears repeat;
Yet blended with some bitter is the sweet.

LXXXVIII.

For she had heard as well in that discourse,
For might and beauty voiced, Marphisa's praise;
Heard, how Rogero thither bends his course,
Together with that lady, as he says,
Where in weak post and with unequal force
King Agramant the Christian army stays.
Such fair companionship the lady lauds,
But neither likes that union nor applauds.

LXXXIX.

Nor light suspicion has she of that queen:
For, were Marphisa beauteous, as was said,
And they together till that time had been,
'T were marvel but Rogero loved the maid:
Yet would she not believe; but hung between
Her hopes and fears, and in Mount Alban stayed;
And close and anxious there, until the day
Which was to bring her joy or sorrow, lay.

* Vivian and Malagigi.

XC.

This while Mount Alban's prince and castellain,
Rinaldo, first of that fair brotherhood,
—I say in honour, not in age, for twain
In right of birth before the warrior stood,
Who—as the sun illumes the starry train—
Had by his deeds ennobled Aymon's blood,
One day at noon, with none beside a page
To serve him, reached that famous fortilage.

XCI.

Hither had good Rinaldo now repaired;
Because returning Paris-ward again,
From Brava, (whither had he often fared,
As said, to seek Angelica in vain)
He of that pair those evil news had heard,
His Malagigi and his Viviane,
How they were to Maganza to be sent;
And hence to Agrismont his way had bent.

XCII.

There, hearing of the safety of that pair,
And of their enemies' defeat and fall;
And how Rogero and Marphisa were
The authors of their ruin; and how all
His valiant brethren and his cousins are
Returned, and harboured in Mount Alban's hall,
Until he there embrace the friendly throng
Each hour appears to him a twelvemonth long.

XCIII.

His course to Mont Albano has he ta'en;
And, there embracing wife and children dear,
Mother and brethren and the cousins twain,
(They who were captives to their foe whilere)
A parent swallow seems, amid that train,
Which, with full beak, its fasting young doth cheer.
With them a day or more the warrior stayed,
Then issued forth and others thence conveyed.

XCIV.

Guichard, Duke Aymon's eldest born, and they,
Richard, Alardo, and Richardet' combined,
Vivian and Malagigi, wend their way
In arms, the martial paladin behind.
Bradamant, waiting the appointed day,
Which she, in her desire, too slow opined,
Feigned herself ailing to the brethren true,
Nor would she join in arms the banded crew;

XCV.

And, saying that she ailed, most truly said;
Yet 'twas not corporal pain or fever sore,
It was Desire that on her spirit preyed,
Diseased with Love's disastrous fit: no more
Rinaldo in Mount Alban's castle stayed:
With him his kinsman's flower the warrior bore.
How he for Paris journeyed, and how well
He succoured Charles, shall other canto tell.

NOTES TO CANTO XXX.

... 1.

Departing thence, insane Orlando flies
To Zizera, a seaward town, whose site
Is in Gibraltar's bay, or (if you please)
Say Gibletàr's, for either way 'tis right.
Stanza x. lines 1, 2, 3, 4.

It is termed *Gibletorre* in the Diary of Teongue, chaplain of two king's ships in the Mediterranean in the years 1675—9. In somewhat the same way we say Trafàlgar or Traflagàr, giving the word sometimes a foreign and sometimes an English accentuation.

In the original it is,

Quindi partito venne à una terra
Zizera detta, che siede a lo stretto
Di Ẓibeltarro, o vuoi di Zibeltarra,
Chè l' uno e l' altro nome le vien detto.

I do not know what Ariosto means by *Zizera*, and can find no trace of such a town.

2.

He spurs his horse amid the billows high,
Wholly resolved to reach the farther side.
Stanza xiii. lines 5 and 6.

In the same Diary of Tcôngue, and describing the same ground, we are told of *Orlando's gappe*, and are informed that it is so called from a tradition respecting *one Sir Orlando Furioso.*

We may here observe on the singular tests of literary success, which vouch the merits of Ariosto. He is the only modern poet, it would seem, that has given a name to a place beyond the limits of his country, and one of very few that have achieved present and posthumous popularity.

3.

Agramant and Marsilius strive in vain,
With labour sore, this tangle to undo, &c.
Stanza xix. lines 1 and 2.

'It may not be amiss to take a little retrospect, in order to see how the matter was settled by Agramant, which seems rather to require some explanation. By the first lots that were drawn, the combatants stood thus: first, Rodomont and Rogerò: fourth, Mandricardo and Marphisa. The list being prepared for the fight between Rodomont and Mandricardo, while these knights are arming themselves, a new dispute arises between them and Gradasso and Sacripant for Durindana and Frontina, which puts a stop to the expected combat between Rodomont and Mandricardo. Marphisa adds to the confusion by carrying off Brunello prisoner, whom she accuses of stealing her sword; and Rogero seeing the order of the lots disturbed, claims again his horse from Rodomont. Agramant, to settle the first dispute between Rodomont and Mandricardo, orders the cause to be determined by Doralice, who choosing Mandricardo her former lover, quits the camp with indignation. The list now remained according to the first lots, to be entered by

Rogero and Mandricardo, but Gradasso persisting still to claim Durindana from Mandricardo, Agramant proposes that lots should be again drawn to determine whether Rogero or Gradasso should first engage with Mandricardo, and, to prevent future strife, proposes that whoever draws the lot of combat shall determine both his own claim and the claim of the knight who loses the lot; that when Rogero wins or loses, he shall not only win or lose the eagle for himself, but Gradasso shall, in right of his conquest, or in consequence of his defeat, continue to bear the shield of Hector, or relinquish the claim. In this last disposition of the lots, no provision seems to be made for the termination of Marphisa's quarrel with Mandricardo.'—*Hoole.*

4.

And Mandricardo, sucking from her eyes
Those sweet tears, &c.

Stanza xxxvii. lines 5 and 6.

This passage may be taken from Statius where Argia endeavours to persuade Polynices to quit the siege of Thebes.

Risit Echionius juvenis tenerumque dolorem
Conjugis amplexu solatur, et oscula mœstis
Tempestiva genis posuit—
" Solve metus animo "——

Hoole.

5.

Gradasso tells to them who make demand,
" He was my prisoner in the Syrian tower."

Stanza xxxix. lines 6 and 7.

When Mandricardo acquired the arms of Hector. See the INNAMORATO.

6.

——— *and your Isolier.*

Stanza xl. line 2.

Isolier, as well as Doralice, was a Spaniard.

7.

So hurtled, but with plumes of different hue,
Those others often on Thessalian plain.

Stanza xlviii. lines 3 and 4.

The Roman eagles were black, those borne by Mandricardo and Rogero white.

8.

For two or three fell flaming from on high,
Which had ascended to the starry sphere.

Stanza xlix. lines 3 and 4.

A sphere of fire was supposed in the Ptolemaic system. Hence to reconcile Don Quixote (who is blindfolded) to the probability of his having arrived at a certain height in his imaginary ascent upon the wooden horse Clavileno, a handful of flax is burned under his nose.

9.

Had Balisarda smote him full, though crowned
With Hector's helm, the enchantment had been vain.

Stanza lv. lines 1 and 2.

Hector's arms were impenetrable, but nothing was impenetrable by Balisarda. Such are the contradictions incidental to the employment of such machinery as that of magic.

10.

Which now you cast away, and cleft before.

Stanza lxi. line 3.

When " Rogero's shield was cleft in twain" in Stanza LII.

I HAVE added to the present volume specimens of translation of two very different works of Ariosto.

With respect to the first, the version of the xxvth canto of the Furioso, I shall observe that it was made, without any view of publication, several years ago by an old schoolfellow, who will not allow me to particularize him, and who once thought of extending his labours over the whole field which he has partially cultivated. This was only shown to me after I had begun my own translation. I am more especially led to mention the circumstance, because our coincidence in plan, as I think, tells much in favour of the system we have adopted in translating the Furioso, stanza by stanza, into the same metre as the original. He, however, who may think me right in agreeing with my fellow-labourer in this principle of translation, may censure me for not proceeding upon his model in my details, and certainly there are graces in his version within my reach, besides others which I might be ill able to imitate. I allude to the good effect which he has produced by the adoption of modes of speech more especially appropriated to English poetry, such as putting sentences in apposition, instead of conjunction, &c. &c. &c. If I have not adopted this phraseology in general, it has not been without consideration that I have been sparing in the employment of it. Thinking that Ariosto, though a bold borrower of beauties which he almost always improves, is yet remarkable for seldom dealing in the conventional diction of Italian poetry, I wished to preserve

as much as possible this feature of my original, and have therefore rarely resorted to our own conventional language of poetry in my copy.

There is another thing of which the reader (judging from its generally successful employment in the following specimen) might wish I had been an imitator. I mean the practice of finishing with an alexandrine, which seems to supply the place of the double-rhymed couplet in the Italian, and perhaps also pleases us, as recalling to memory the sonorous close of the Spenserian stanza. But however this may please in some parts (as in this version of the xxvth canto for example) there are many others, where it would, I think, be very injudiciously employed; such as in those where there is little poetry, and where much of the charm consists in neatness and shortness of narration. In these (and more especially in such up-hill-work as the genealogical and complimentary cantos) the alexandrine would operate, if I am not mistaken, as an intolerable drag-chain. But it may be said; "Why not *put on* and *take off* (to use the language of a way-post) as may be required by the varieties of the road? Why not use the alexandrine, as Dryden has? To this I rejoin, that a precedent drawn from one species of versification is not necessarily applicable to another. In what is called English heroick verse, there being no place absolutely fixed for the alexandrine (except that it must not occur in the first line of a couplet, nor in the first or second of a triplet) the ear is not disappointed by its absence; and accordingly it is

used by him twice or twenty times in a hundred lines; but the effect must be different when the ear has been used to expect it in a certain place. And I think that the stanza of Ariosto would suffer as much as that of Spenser by being shortened of its ordinary dimensions.

I ought moreover to state that I tried the experiment in my first essays at a translation of the Furioso, and renounced it as I have done some others which pleased me in parts, but dissatisfied me upon the whole, as giving a different colouring to my original. But I have so often stated my reasons for having been studious of fidelity, as more due to Ariosto than any other author with whom I am conversant, that I will not detain the reader by any further preface. I will only add, that I may designate Lord Holland as the translator of the other specimen of a work which happily illustrates Ariosto's variety of powers.

CANTO XXV.

I.

Oh mighty contrast in the youthful mind,
The thirst of glory and the sting of love!
Which most prevails 'tis often hard to find,
Since each in turn the other towers above.
Here both to sway the pagan knights combined,
For much their minds the calls of duty move
Their strife to leave, their combat to suspend,
Till to their camp distressed they should their succour lend.

II.

But more did Love, since but for those commands
Issued from her whom both alike obeyed,
Neither in fight had checked his furious hands
Till one had triumphed, one in dust been laid;
In vain had Agramant to join his bands
Hoped their advance, implored their tardy aid.
Hence Love, not always hurtful to a knight,
If oft it causes wrong, can sometimes counsel right.

III.

So now reserving for a future day
Their own disputes, the combatants repair
To save the Moorish army, as it lay
Near Paris, guided by their much-loved fair;
And that small dwarf attends them on the way
Who dogged the Tartar knight with so much care,
Till he the jealous Rhodomont had brought
E'en face to face with him when they so lately fought.

IV.

As through a meadow they their road pursue,
Four knights disporting by a stream are seen;
Two were unarmed, in helmets cased were two,
And by them stood a dame of lovely mien;
But who they were another time must show,
For to Ruggiero I must change the scene,
That honest knight, who, as my lines made known,
Had lately in a well his brilliant buckler thrown.

V.

Scarce a short mile from that same well he went,
Ere he a messenger in hurry met;
'Twas one of many Agramant had sent
The succour of all pagan knights to get.
He told, how Charles had in strait trenches pent,
And with a mighty force the Moors beset;
And did not speedy aid relieve the host,
The Moorish honour sure, perhaps his life, was lost.

VI.

With various thoughts and plans at once assailed,
Ruggiero saw his cares on every side.
Conscious that time and fit occasion failed
What best to choose, and wisely to decide.
He let the courier go: the dame prevailed;
He follows where her warm entreaties guide;
No room for doubt, no moment for delay,
When she in suppliant mood so earnestly did pray.

VII.

The sun was fast declining in the west,
When journeying onward he had crossed the plain,
And reached a place Marsilio late did wrest,
E'en in the heart of France, from Charlemagne.
He passed the drawbridge; none his steps arrest,
None close the bolts, his entrance none restrain,
Though on the ramparts and around the gate
Numbers of men in arms to guard the fortress wait.

VIII.

So well they knew the lady by his side,
They him, as her companion, harmless thought;
Hence they unquestioned onward let him ride,
Nor asked him whence he came nor what he sought.
He reached the market-place, and there descried
A blaze of fire, with ranks of churls untaught
Pressing around; and there was standing by,
Fettered, and sad, and pale, a youth condemned to die.

IX.

Downcast he seemed, but when he raised from ground
His moistened eyes to view th' approaching knight,
Ruggiero in the wretch his mistress found,
Or thought he found, and started at the sight;
Face, features, figure, all his soul confound,
All seem to prove that strange conjecture right;
" Can I to sense," he said, " belief deny?
" 'Tis Bradamante sure, or else I am not I.

X.

" Perhaps her courage did the maid impel
" To outstrip my speed, the wretched to defend,
" And then the mad attempt not turning well
" Might in the seizure that I witness end.
" How rash, excess of courage not to quell
" 'Till I was by my useful aid to lend!
" But that is past.—Away all vain regret!
" I thank my God I'm come in time to save her yet."

XI.

This said, he grasps his sword with double force
(His lance was broken in a former fight),
Then at the rabble headlong drives his horse,
Scatters their ranks, o'erwhelms them in their flight,
Tramples o'er mangled bodies in his course,
And hacks and hews their necks to left and right;
The wretches fly, he whirls among his foes,
Maimed limbs and broken heads surround him as he goes.

XII.

As flocks of fowl o'er stagnant pools who fly,
Or feeding on the borders careless stray,
Should suddenly some falcon hovering nigh
Pounce on the plump, and make one bird his prey,
Disperse, regardless of their company,
While each to his own refuge wings his way;
E'en so the graceless troop betook to flight
When midst them all they found and felt the gallant knight.

XIII.

Yet he had time clean off the heads to mow
Of five or six who lagged behind the rest;
As many more he cleft with downright blow,
Some to the teeth, and others to the chest;
The wretches had no helmets on, I know,
But iron caps, which, if without a crest,
Were close and tough; and had they helmets been,
His sword had cleft them too, though not below the chin.

XIV.

Ruggiero's force did no resemblance bear
To aught in modern days by knight possest;
'Twas far beyond a lion or a bear,
Or any native, any foreign beast;
Perhaps an earthquake with it might compare,
Or the great devil perhaps would match it best;
Not he of hell, but he who thundering throws
Hell-fire by sea and land on all my master's foes.

XV.

One man at least at every stroke there fell,
Sometimes a pair, or four, or even five;
Ere long of slain he could a hundred tell.
So quick the hardest steel his sword did rive,
That knives scarce cut the yielding curd so well;
For Falerina, labouring to contrive
Orlando's death, did that dread weapon frame,
E'en in the magic bower that bore Orgagna's name.

XVI.

But soon she cursed the plot her malice laid,
Seeing the self-same sword lay waste her bower.
Judge then what deaths it dealt, what havoc made,
When wielded now by fierce Ruggiero's power.
If rage he ever felt, or force displayed,
Or nobly wrought, 'twas in this very hour,
This glorious moment, when the hero thought
That he for her he loved, for Bradamante, fought.

XVII.

Ask you how 'gainst such might the rabble sped?
E'en as the hare before the loosened hound;
Numbers and more than I can reckon fled,
While not a few lay slaughtered on the ground.
The dame who late Ruggiero thither led
Had, while he fought, the fettered youth unbound,
And given such arms as time and place afford,
In his left hand a shield, and in his right a sword.

XVIII.

And he, as one much injured by the crowd,
Did all he could to vent his rage thereon,
So great his prowess too, that 'tis allowed
The name of valour in that field he won.
But evening closed, and now the western cloud
No longer glistened with the setting sun,
When issuing forth, victorious from the fight,
Ruggiero left the fort with that young rescued knight.

XIX.

When safe beyond the gate, they both discern
No foe, no danger threatening their retreat;
His earnest thanks the youth would fain return
In courteous guise, and phrase of knighthood meet.
But fain the stranger's title would he learn,
For that he longed by name the knight to greet,
Who thus unasked released a man unknown,
And saved another's life at peril of his own.

XX.

" The form indeed" (Ruggiero thinks apart),
" The beauteous face, the heavenly mien are here,
" But those sweet sounds that first inthralled my heart,
" My Bradamante's voice, I do not hear.
" No—thanks so cold she never could impart
" To that true lover she was wont to cheer.
" E'en now we parted, and were *she* the same
" Could she so soon forget her own Ruggiero's name?"

XXI.

To solve his anxious doubts he then designed;
" Ere now," quoth he, " I sure thy face have seen;
" I rack my thought the place and time to find,
" And yet I cannot figure where or when.
" But say, for surely you recall to mind
" Where, before now, we have together been,
" And tell thy name, for well I may inquire
" Who 'tis my arms to day have rescued from the fire.

XXII.

" I should not marvel hadst thou seen my face,"
Said he, " nor yet remember when or where;
" For I, as thou, have roamed from place to place
" Seeking adventures, and have found my share.
" And yet a twin, a sister of my race,
" Misleads thee sure: we strange resemblance bear,
" And she like me in steel is wont to ride,
" And gird a warrior's weapon on her side.

XXIII.

" If so, our features cheat not thee alone;
" Friends, kindred, all have been perplext before;
" My father, nay my mother, has been known
" Scarce to distinguish 'twixt the twins she bore.
" One mark there was, and now that mark is gone;
" Close to my neck these locks I always wore,
" While she in braids her lovely hair would bind,
" Or leave her tresses loose and floating in the wind.

XXIV.

" But having late in fight received a wound,
" E'en on her head ('twere long to tell you how),
" A Christian, who her streaming temples bound,
" Her flowing ringlets clipped from neck to brow;
" Well may our features then your sight confound,
" For sex and name is all the difference now;
" His sister, Bradamant, Rinaldo claims,
" And me, his brother, Richardetto names.

XXV.

" Strange is the likeness I *my sister* bear,
" To me the source of pleasure and of pain;
" Nor less could I, if thou wilt deign to hear,
" Effects yet stranger from that cause explain."
Rogero lends the tale a willing ear,
Charmed with the theme beyond the softest strain.
What song so sweet can with discourse compare,
That brings to lovers' minds an image of their fair?

XXVI.

" As late through groves," said he, " my sister rode,
" Her helmet off, unguarded as she strayed,
" A dart, from Moorish bands concealed in wood,
" Behind her temple struck the martial maid,
" And clotted all her flowing locks in blood;
" But she the wound to probe, the cure to aid,
" Was forced her lovely tresses to resign,
" And onward took her way with locks close cropt like mine.

XXVII.

" She went not long ere tempted to dismount,
" For she was worn with toil and faint with pain;
" Nor long asleep beside a shady fount,
" Stretched on the grassy bank the maid had lain,
" Ere 'gan the strange adventure I recount,
" More strange though true than stories poets feign;
" For led by chance, by thirst, or search of game,
" To that same fountain Flordespina came.

XXVIII.

" When she the slumbering form in arms descried,
" The limbs concealed, the face alone in sight,
" A sword, and not a distaff by her side,
" False thoughts inspire: she gazes with delight,
" Nor deems the manly dress can virgin hide,
" But views, and viewing loves a seeming knight;
" She roused the chase, and feigning to pursue
" To distant thicket's shades apart the stranger drew.

XXIX.

" There, in the lonely forest's deep recess,
" Melting with love, and fearless of surprize,
" Her words, her gestures, speak her soft distress,
" Her glowing cheeks, her kind but ardent eyes,
" Her panting sighs, her inward flames confess;
" She yields to full desire, she scorns disguise,
" Prints on my sister's lips a fiery kiss,
" The pledge, the challenge, to a keener bliss.

XXX.

" The error well my sister could perceive,
" And shame and pity much her heart perplex;
" No power had she such torments to relieve,
" Or calm the storms her fair companion vex.
' But if not cure, I yet may undeceive,'
" Said she, ' and better 'tis to own my sex
' Than pass, as needs I must in lady's sight,
' For man without a heart, a base and groveling knight.'

XXXI.

" And well she judged, for dull and senseless beast
" Were he, nor formed of man's superior clay,
" Who, when a willing fair her love confest,
" Ripe, young, and panting for the sweet affray,
" Could to such challenge droop his coward crest,
" And in cold converse waste the precious day:
" Owning her sex the truth the heroine clears,
" And damps a woman's hopes to shun a woman's sneers.

XXXII.

" How born on Afric's distant coast she told,
" How yet a child she brandished sword and shield,
" And glory sought, like Amazons of old,
" A virgin warrior in the martial field!
" But not for this did blood once fired grow cold,
" Or love's disease to reason's medicine yield;
" Too deep the cruel god had fixed the dart,
" And what might ward the blow could not allay the smart.

XXXIII.

" For not for this that face less lovely seems,
" Less bright those eyes, or less divine that air;
" Nor hateful truth the captive heart redeems;
" For spite of words, the gazing, amorous fair,
" Or views the manly dress and fondly deems
" All love can wish must needs inhabit there,
" Or vainly struggling with the sad belief,
" Believes indeed, and weeps, and yields her soul to grief.

XXXIV.

" To hear the gentle maid her fate repine
" The sternest breast would soft compassion lend.
' What woes,' she cried, ' what torments e'er like mine!
' Love without hope! desires without an end!
' All other passions, wicked or divine,
' To some known goal, to some clear object tend;
' The thorn may wound, but yet the rose is there;
' Nor flower nor fruit has mine; my love is all despair!

XXXV.

' If the god, envious of my happy state,
' Resolved t' inflict on me his cruel wound,
' Why should he toil new torments to create,
' Nor deal those shafts he deals to all around?
' For never sure 'mid all the freaks of fate,
' Female inflamed for female have we found;
' Nor love for woman burns in womankind,
' Nor heifer heifer seeks, nor hind pursues a hind.

XXXVI.

'Where yet before in earth, or air, or sea,
'Did fates contrive such strange, such monstrous love?
'Sure the relentless god reserved for me
'The last caprices of his power to prove.
'Incestuous fires the world before might see;
'Such Myrrha, such did Ninus' widow, move.
'More lawless yet inspired the Cretan dame;
'But though less guilty mine, 'tis sure a madder flame.

XXXVII.

'Wild though their passions, yet they had a cure,
'And still on male did female fix her mind;
'The beast she wooed, Pasiphaë to allure,
'In painted wood her human limbs confined.
'All soothed their pains; but those which I endure
'No hope can harbour, no relief can find;
'Not Dædalus, not Jove can tender aid,
'Or burst th' indissoluble knot that Nature made.'

XXXVIII.

"Thus weeps, and sobs, and moans, the hapless dame,
"In fruitless anguish and in wild despair,
"Vents her sad vengeance on her tender frame,
"Beats her pale cheek, and tears her lovely hair.
"My sister, object of the hopeless flame,
"To cure the pains her pity made her share,
"In vain with reason strove to soothe her grief;
"Love asks no soothing words, but full and prompt relief.

XXXIX.

"At length, as parting day began to close,
"Pleased with the prospect of so dear a guest,
"The amorous nymph, to lull awhile her woes,
"The glad occasion seized, my sister pressed
"Beneath her neighbouring roof to take repose;
"For now the sinking sun and reddening west
"Enjoin retreat to such as did not care
"To brave the dews of night, and sleep in open air.

XL.

" Though loth, my sister could not but comply.
" Together them they to that place retire
" Where late by traitor bands condemned to die
" Your valiant arm redeemed me from the fire.
" There Flordespina greets her courteously,
" But changed her manly arms to maid's attire,
" That she to whom such blandishments were shown,
" Might pass for what she was, and be a woman known.

XLI.

" For seeing well how her misguided flame
" From the false garb nor aid nor profit drew,
" 'Twere hard, she deemed, her long unblemished fame
" Should yet be stained, or scandal should ensue;
" Nay more, from thence the first delusion came;
" Gazing on seeming man the passion grew;
" Perchance the woman seen without disguise
" Might cure her wounded heart, and undeceive her eyes.

XLII.

" That night one bed the lovely pair received,
" The bed the same, but different their repose;
" This soundly slept, that sighed and sobbed and grieved:
" Or restless love forbids her eyes to close,
" Or in short sleep that not her mind relieves,
" Some treacherous bliss, some torturing dream arose.
" Still in one course her feverish fancy ran,
" And heaven, she idly dreamt, had made her guest a man.

XLIII.

" When for cool streams a burning patient pants,
" If closed awhile his eyes in broken sleeps,
" Each well-known rill his tortured fancy haunts,
" And his parched lips in every fount he steeps:
" So heaven in dreams her fiery wishes grants
" In hopes, the harvest of delight she reaps,
" 'Till waking she would clasp th' expected youth,
" And her baulked hand betrays the melancholy truth.

XLIV.

" To her false gods throughout the livelong night,
" What prayers she offered and what vows she paid!
" To change her comrade's sex, if change they might,
" Through heavenly mercy, or through magic aid—
" In vain—the gods such idle wishes slight,
" Or laugh to hear such wild entreaties made.
" Till Phœbus rising from his watery bed,
" From his bright face again his light and radiance shed.

XLV.

" Leaving a bed nor joy nor sleep had blest,
" Fresh pain assails poor Flordespina's heart,
" Since much with pity, more with shame distrest,
" Fair Bradamante hastens to depart;
" Meanwhile the love-sick hostess loads her guest
" With gifts unsought, a steed whom costly art
" Had decked with gold; and further mark of love,
" A bright embroidered cloak her own fair labours wove.

XLVI.

" Awhile the princess on the road attends
" Her guest, then homeward weeping turns away,
" And homeward too the maid her journey bends,
" And Montalbano reached ere close of day.
" Where we her brethren, mother, kindred, friends,
" Who much had marvelled at her long delay,
" And feared the worst, in joy to see her come,
" Flock round to welcome Bradamante home.

XLVII.

" But when aside the maid her helmet threw,
" No loosened tresses wanton in the wind,
" Nor with less wonder does her kindred view
" The strange embroidered cloak that trails behind;
" Till she to us relates, as I to you,
" The various tales, how she her locks resigned
" To save her life, when issuing from the wood
" A Moorish javelin pierced, and bathed her head in blood.

XLVIII.

" She tells how, sleeping by the fountain's side,
" A beauteous huntress first disturbed her rest,
" Who since the manly dress her sex belied,
" Led her to distant shades and love confest;
" And of the flames avowed, th' endearments tried,
" The sorrows uttered there, she nought suppress;
" Adds how at night she shared her hostess' bed,
" And paints her fruitless love, and tears at parting shed.

XLIX.

" Now long in Saragossa and in France
" Fair Flordespina's face to me was known,
" Nor failed her bloom, and eyes' bewitching glance,
" To fire my blood; but yet, while hope was none,
" Scorning to love and pine without a chance,
" I strove and kept the rising passion down;
" But this strange tale the dying embers stirred,
" And all my flame revived and kindled as I heard.

L.

" Hence sprang new hope, and love who in despair
" Had slumbered long, roused by that hope again,
" Lays the deep plot, and weaves the subtle snare
" To catch the prize he panted to obtain.
" The strong resemblance I my sister bear
" Might well deceive the princess and her train;
" And I, should they as others be misled,
" Like her might fire her blood, like her might share her bed.

LI.

" Should I, or should I not? I deem it just
" Where pleasure calls to seek the dear delight;
" Yet I to none the deep design entrust,
" For none in love's affairs can counsel right.
" The armour, that aside my sister thrust,
" I first secure, then in the depth of night
" Vault on her steed, nor wait the dawn of day,
" Which while it cleared my path my purpose might betray.

LII.

" Love who through darkness was my faithful guide,
" Led me so sure, so swiftly to my fair,
" That from her gate I saw in western tide
" The sun yet sinking when I halted there;
" And lucky he who first my form descried,
" And ran the tidings to his queen to bear,
" Kind thanks and gorgeous presents shall requite,
" Whose welcome words announce th' approaching female knight.

LIII.

" As you but now so all my looks mislead,
" All think in me they Bradamante greet;
" Th' embroidered cloak, the trappings, and the steed
" Which late she bore from hence, assist the cheat,
" And Flordespina runs with eager speed
" Her welcome, her returning guest to meet;
" Her thoughts with love, her cheeks with rapture glow,
" Nor gladder heart nor face the world throughout could show.

LIV.

" As round my neck her lovely arms she threw,
" As on my lips her lips a kiss impart,
" Judge through my frame how swift the poison flew,
" Thrilled in my blood, and rankled at my heart.
" To distant rooms we hand in hand withdrew,
" There too officious fondness played its part,
" The princess 'self must take the handmaid's place,
" She must my spurs remove, and she my helm unlace.

LV.

" Then from her stores a costly robe she chose,
" Her own fair hands the rustling silks unfold,
" She o'er my limbs the female garment throws,
" She hides my shortened locks in nets of gold.
" The while, lest eyes or lips the truth disclose,
" Downcast I stand, with looks demure and cold;
" And none my voice detect, so well I teach
" My tongue a female tone and gentle lisping speech.

LVI.

" Me thence attired to spacious halls she drew,
" Where knights and dames had long assembled been;
" They rising greet us with the honours due
" To high degree, to princess or to queen;
" There often inwardly I smiled to view
" Knights, not aware what stately but unseen

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

LVII.

" And now advancing night had closed our cheer,
" And slaves removed the board at which we fed,
" A board with fruits, the glory of the year,
" And rich delicious cates but lately spread!
" When Flordespina rose, nor asked to hear
" What cause again my steps had thither led,
" But bade me with a smile divinely fair
" Remain at least awhile, that night her bed to share.

LVIII.

" Slaves, pages, ladies, handmaids, all were gone:
" Alone and naked in the bed we lay,
" And flaming torches round the chamber shone,
" Shedding broad blaze and imitating day.
' Lady,' I said, and thus my tale begun,
' Marvel not one so lately torn away
' So soon returns, though from my flight I fear
' You hardly guessed how soon, or when to see me here.

LIX.

' Why thus I went, why thus again I came,
' My faithful words in order shall explain,
' For could my staying have allayed thy flame,
' How had I joyed for ages to remain!
' To live, to die with thee, my only aim!
' But since 'twas clear I but enhanced the pain,
' Not soothed the wound, the wisest choice I made,
' Fled pangs my presence caused, my presence could not aid.

LX.

'Now fortune led me from my road to where
'Thick branches woven formed a deeper shade,
'When, lo! a sudden shriek assails my ear,
'A woman's shriek, which loudly called for aid;
'I fly—and in a lake as crystal clear,
'Strange sight! an angling faun had hooked a maid;
'Naked he dragged her from her native flood,
'And fain the savage wretch had feasted on her blood.

LXI.

'But sword in hand I to her succour flew,
'No other weapon did the place supply,
'Nor needed more—for I the monster slew.
'Back to the lake the maid leapt suddenly,
'And floating, cried, "To thee the merit's due,
"I live, and no ungrateful nymph am I:
"Queen of the lake, these watery realms I haunt,
"Then ask whate'er you wish, whate'er you ask I grant.

LXII.

"For I have power strange wonders to command,
"And nature's laws are changed by my decrees;
"Whatever then thy wishes shall demand,
"My skill, my knowledge, shall effect with ease;
"For at my breath shall quake the solid land,
"The air shall harden, or the fire shall freeze,
"The moon to earth direct her downward course,
"The sun himself stand still, and own enchantment's force."

LXIII.

'She spoke,—the paltry gift of wealth I slight,
'Nor ask extended empire to acquire,
'Disdain the vulgar praise of martial might,
'Nor e'en to victory's glorious palm aspire;
'Some gift I sought, and sure my choice was right,
'Might cure thy pains, might soothe thy kind desire;
'Thy bliss, thy joy, I to the world prefer.
'This was my sole request, I left the means to her.

LXIV.

'I said; the plunging nymph again I view;
'No word she speaks, the lake her form sustains,
'While from its surface she some water threw.
'Soon as th' enchanted stream my limbs attains,
'Soon as the holy drops my skin bedew,
'A stronger sex comes rushing through my veins,
'Through my whole frame the strange emotion ran,
'I see, I feel the change, and am indeed a man.

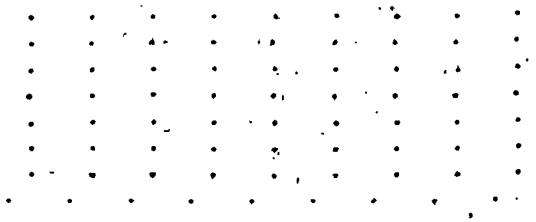
LXV.

'And, but that deeds the wondrous fact shall prove,
'You well might doubt the marvels I relate,
'Yet man or maid alike to please I strove,
'My will was sure the same in either state;
'Though fate awhile opposed our hopeless love,
'Lo! how triumphant love has conquered fate!'

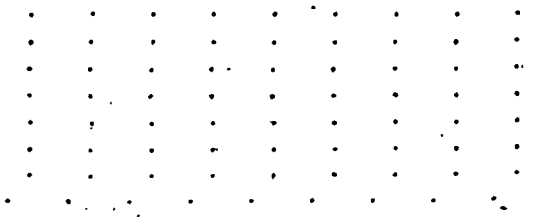
LXVI.

LXVII.

LXVIII.



LXIX.



LXX.

" Our bliss awhile was undisturbed by fears,
" For months our loves in secret we enjoy:
" At last the truth transpires,—the monarch hears,
" And plans of dire revenge his thoughts employ.
" To glut his rage the dreadful pile he rears,
" Where flames at once should guilt and life destroy.
" Thy courage saved me: thou hast seen the rest,
" But stings of deep remorse lie rankling in my breast."

LXXI.

The youth, Ruggiero's journey to beguile,
Thus through the night recounted as they went
His strange adventures; they had reached the while
A hill in hollow ways and caverns rent,
Their painful march o'er many a rugged mile
Followed a path 'twixt rocks and mountains pent,
O'er which did Agrimant its turrets rear,
Guarded by Buero's son, a knight called Aldigier.

LXXII.

Vivian's and Malagigi's brother, he
Of spurious birth, partook with them the stain;
Some who on Gerard's lawful pedigree
Would graft his stock, are surely rash and vain:
Nor boots it much; the youth we all agree
Was bold, was wise, frank, courteous, and humane,
And strove his brother's orders to fulfil,
By night and day to guard his castle on that hill.

LXXIII.

There he his cousin Ricciardetto greets
E'en with a brother's love, as well he might,
And not uncourteously Ruggiero treats.
Good comrade welcome makes a stranger knight,
Yet with no face of joy the guests he meets;
A lowering brow betrays all is not right;
That very day had painful tidings brought,
Sad were his looks thereat, and gloomy was his thought.

LXXIV.

Hence waving compliment, "Bad news," quoth he,
"Brother," he loved to call his kinsman so;
"I learn e'en now, from sure authority,
"That Bertolagi, that unrighteous foe,
"With fierce Lanfusa does in league agree;
"Vivian, alas! and Malagigi too,
"With precious gifts he bribes her to resign,
"Her captives now so long, your kinsman dear and mine.

LXXV.

"She, since Ferrau did them prisoners make,
"Has kept them both in dark and loathsome place,
"And now to that bad man of whom I spake
"She sells the knights,—a contract foul and base!
"She sends them to a fort, when day shall break,
"Where near Bayona reigns Maganza's race,
"And she in person will the price advance,
"The price of noble blood, the best that flows in France.

LXXVI.

" E'en now th' account to our Rinaldo went;
" I bade the man who bore it spur his steed;
" Yet is it late, their malice to prevent;
" Short is the time, the journey long indeed:
" No force have I can from this fort be sent:
" Quick will, but halting power must ill succeed:
" The wretch, the knights once his, will surely slay:
" I know not what to do, I know not what to say."

LXXVII.

Such news did Richardetto much displease;
Ruggiero grieved scarce less that he should grieve;
But when both knights he mute and helpless sees,
Devising nought that can their friends relieve,
Boldly he cries—" To set your minds at ease
" The task be mine—and I will all achieve,
" In spite of thousands, trust this sword and me,
" From bondage and from death your kinsmen knights to free.

LXXVIII.

" No need or arms or soldiers to provide,
" Myself's enough, I ask no further aid;
" All I demand is this, a trusty guide
" To bring me where the filthy bargain's paid;
" The news shall reach you, if I thither ride,
" In cries of those met there in blood to trade."
Thus said the knight, and one there was who knew,
However strange his speech, that what he spake was true.

LXXIX.

The other deemed the vaunt mere idle prate,
Of one who talked too much, too little knew,
Till Richardetto did aside relate
How to release him from the flames he flew;
And how he knew him, if in promise great,
As great and greater in performance too,
So time would show; this hearing, Aldigier
'Gan notice all he said, and lend a willing ear.

LXXX.

Nor noticed only—at his plenteous board
He crowned the stranger master of the feast;
And there the three conclude with one accord,
Those knights shall be by them alone released.
Meanwhile the eyes of peasant and of lord
Were closed in sleep, and day's hard labour ceased.
But not Ruggiero's; in his wounded breast
Rankled one thorny thought, and still disturbed his rest.

LXXXI.

Remorse had stung him—news that morning heard
Of Agramant besieged, his heart o'ercame—
Each day, each hour, each moment he deferred,
To aid his monarch, added to his shame;
And roaming thus with Christians he incurred
Scorn from the Moors, and scandal on his name;
And if baptized at such suspicious time,
'Twould no conversion be, but cowardice and crime.

LXXXII.

That lights of faith had burst upon his mind,
In other season might belief obtain;
But now when Agramant in siege confined,
Implored his succour and implored in vain,
All in his change a base pretence would find,
"'Tis fear," they'd say, "or viler love of gain
"Sways him, and not religion's mild control."
This well Ruggiero knew, it stung him to the soul.

LXXXIII.

It stung him too abruptly to depart,
Without the license of his sovereign fair;
Backward and forward oft inclined his heart,
As love and honour most engrossed his care,
For she long since her orders did impart
To Flordespina's castle to repair,
And thither (as indeed erewhile I said)
They settled both to come in Richardetto's aid.

LXXXIV.

And now he recollects, he did agree
In Vallombrosa to rejoin the fair;
And there she surely will have gone, thought he,
And marvel greatly that I am not there;
For if to come myself I was not free,
A note a servant might a message bear.
Whereas I now not only disobey,
But give no signs of life, and seem to slink away.

LXXXV.

Thus variously perplext, at length he planned
To write her word of all he underwent;
What though no sure conveyance be at hand,
The lines shall give his restless passion vent,
And then to bear them at his strict command
Chance may some person on his road present;
This thought, he sprang from bed, nor staid for day,
But called for pen and ink, and lights, without delay.

LXXXVI.

Attentive valets in that castle wait,
Who to Ruggiero all he asks for bring:
So he begins his letter, writes the date,
The compliment, and other usual thing,
And then proceeds the substance to relate,
How news had reached him of the Moorish king,
And how, unless he to his rescue fly,
That king must taken be, or e'en in fight may die.

LXXXVII.

He adds how Agramant in desperate case
Had chiefly turned his thoughts to him for aid:
She must herself have deemed his conduct base
Had he denied his succour or delayed:
No, as he hoped to merit her good grace,
He for her sake as for his own obeyed,
How ill with her would match a tarnished knight,
For she was honour all, pure, innocent, and bright.

LXXXVIII.

Then if he e'er had laboured to obtain
By virtuous acts some little sprig of fame,
If, when obtained, he of that prize was vain,
Hoping unsullied to preserve his name,
He now had motives stronger yet, from stain
To guard it clear, for she would share the same;
Nor only that, but linked in wedded oath
Would be his other self—one soul would dwell in both.

LXXXIX.

So what by word of mouth he said long since,
He studiously repeats in writing now;
Once closed the term of service to his prince,
Should life but last he will redeem his vow;
And, as the sacred truths his mind convince,
Himself a Christian openly avow,
Then from Rinaldo's and her father's hand,
Her, as his bride (a lawful suit), demand.

XC.

"Yes," he subjoins, "to raise the siege I long
"That to my sovereign's camp the Christians lay;
"I fain would silence the ill-natured throng,
"Who else no doubt to my reproach will say,
"He, while smooth weather wafts the bark along,
"Sticks close to Agramant by night and day,
"But parts, when stiffer gales begin to blow,
"And quits a sinking friend to join a conquering foe."

XCI.

"Fifteen, or at the utmost twenty days
"I ask, my loyal zeal for once to show,
"Just time enough the hateful siege to raise,
"Rescue my monarch, and dislodge the foe;
"And then in earnest terms, or courtly phrase,
"To frame some specious reason soon to go.
"Thus much to save my honour I implore,
"And all my life to come is thine for evermore."

XCII.

In fluent language thus Ruggiero pleads
His endless cause, nor can I half recite;
Reason to reason, word to word succeeds,
The paper full, he can no longer write;
But then to fold the letter he proceeds,
And seal, and in his bosom hide from sight,
Hoping, ere night, his luck may find a way,
The lines to her he loves in secret to convey.

XCIII.

The letter closed, 'twas time his eyes to close;
In search of rest he sank upon his bed;
Sleep came, his weary body to compose,
Sweet drops of Lethe o'er his limbs she shed;
He rested till the glimmering dawn arose,
Sprinkling the east with streaks of white and red,
Like wreaths of flowers, in colour bright and gay,
Till from his golden couch breaks forth the glorious day.

XCIV.

Just as the birds, from many a green retreat,
With music ushered in the new-born ray,
Rose Aldigier, for he was keen to greet
His guests, and guide them on their destined way,
Where much he hoped their valour might defeat
The plot, to Bertologi to betray
His brethren dear; and scarcely had he stirred,
The other two sprang up, his footsteps they had heard.

XCV.

They dressed, they armed, and with the cousins twain,
To aid their kinsmen forth Ruggiero went;
Much, as they rode, he prayed them, though in vain,
Alone on that adventure to be sent;
But they, from natural love, the thought disdain,
And were besides too cautious to consent;
So in denial stiff, and firm as stone,
They never quit his side, or let him ride alone.

XCVI.

They on the spot arrived, the very day
That Malagigi was to be conveyed
To his bad foe: where summer's scorching ray
Beat on an open plain the scene was laid;
There neither myrtle green, nor fragrant bay,
Nor ash, nor beech, nor cypress, cast a shade;
The waste, save some few stunted shrubs, was bare,
Nor cleansed by gardener's hoe, nor turned by ploughman's share.

XCVII.

The three bold warriors first their coursers rein,
Where a small path divides that barren waste,
When, lo! a knight approaches o'er the plain;
They saw his armour with much gold inchased,
And that rare long-lived bird that poets feign,
Blazoned in vert they on his scutcheon traced;
But now, enough, I here the canto close,
My breath is spent, I need some short repose.

The Satires of Ariosto, little known out of Italy, are held in high estimation in that country. Some of the best judges have not hesitated to place them on the same line of excellence, though in a different branch of poetry, with the Orlando Furioso. They are in truth the happiest imitation of the satires and epistles of Horace that any modern language possesses. That arch but well-bred raillery, that easy and familiar, but pure and polished felicity of style, which distinguish the Roman satirist, are discernible almost in equal perfection in the great Italian poet. He has employed a phraseology and turn of thought truly Horatian to purposes suggested by the manners of his own age and country; viz. to give a picture of the opinions and passions of the little courts on which he depended, of the pursuits literary or ambitious in which he was personally engaged, and of the hopes and disappointments which constituted the chief incidents of his life. But the delicacy of his sarcasms, the lightness of his allusions, and the easy propriety of his diction, are beauties scarcely susceptible of translation into the language of a country where the idiom is wholly different, the persons and events alluded to generally unknown, and the modes of thinking as well as the customs and manners animadverted upon or described, imperfectly understood by the learned, and not at all familiar to the common reader.

Even the metre of these satires adds to the embarrassment of the Englishman who engages in the translation of them. It is the triplet and alternate rhyme like

that in which Dante composed his immortal work. Such a metre is not only unusual in English, but is singularly ill-adapted in our language to convey that apparent carelessness of style and real delicacy of thought which constitute the charm of the original. A casual remark to this effect led in fact to the present attempt. The translator had been asked his opinion as to the metre best suited to an English version of Ariosto's Satires. After acknowledging the impossibility of moulding English triplets with alternate rhymes to any such purpose, and after balancing the advantages and objections of other more popular metres, such as the eight syllable lines of Swift and Prior, or the dactylick or anapæstick verses in which the same Prior as well as Anstey has excelled, he ventured to pronounce judgment in favour of the ten syllable couplet. He annexed, however, a condition that the cadence and structure of the lines should be modelled neither on the heroick poetry of Dryden, nor even on the didactick Essays of Pope, but on the negligent rhythm general among "the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease" in Charles the Second's time; which Dryden in the Religio Laici, the Cock and the Fox, and some lighter works, has not disdained to preserve, and of which Cowper in an epistle to Mr. Hill has left the most successful, or at least the most Horatian specimen in our language. The translator has indeed in the following satire sometimes admitted an alexandrine or a triplet. Such deviation from his own rule may have added here or there some force to

the passage, and even in some instances enabled him to comprehend in the period the whole sense of his author. But he is conscious that such blemishes or excrescences detract from the resemblance which a copy engages to preserve of the original.

The seventh satire, which is here offered to the reader in such an English dress as in the judgment of the translator would best fit it, was written when Ariosto was Governor of La Garfagnana in the Apennines. It is in the form of an epistle and addressed to Pistofilo, who appears by the context to have been living at Ferrara, the capital of the duchy, and the usual residence of the Poet.

SEVENTH SATIRE OF ARIOSTO,

ADDRESSED TO PISTOFILO.

You bade me, friend, if I should wish to come,
Now Clement's[1] Pope, Embassador to Rome,
And there to serve the Duke a year or two,
Apprize you quick, and leave the rest to you:
And then to make me wish it, you adduced
Sundry good reasons, such as how I used
On terms of easy friendship to converse
With all these Medici—both when the curse
Of exile fell upon them, and of late
When they restored, beheld their Leo, great
In scarlet shoes new crossed[2] to mark his papal state.
'Twould suit the Duke, you said, and profit me
To reach some lofty post or high degree;
More fish, you shrewdly urged, I well might hook
In the main current than the shallow brook.—
Now hear my answer:—I most kindly feel
Fresh proofs of this your unabated zeal,
Which my plain suit would change to costly garb,
And the dull ox exalt to fiery barb.
I grant, to serve my sovereign, I would go
Through fire and water, burning sands and snow,
To Rome—that 's little—but to Spain, to France,
To India—could I so his views advance;
But when you gravely add that I may rise
To some high post, and seize a golden prize,

Lay other traps—for I at call-birds laugh,
Old birds, my friend, are seldom caught with chaff.
—For honour, at Ferrara, I have that—
Why more than six who meet me touch their hat:
They know at times I at the palace dine,
A favour ask, or serve some friend of mine.
Were I not more in purse than honour low
I ne'er should grumble—now, I sometimes do;
Though faith! e'en there my wishes are not large,
Enough just not to live at others' charge
Is all to which my bounded views aspire,
And more, alas! than I shall e'er acquire;
For I have seen so many friends in power,
Yet still found Fortune frown and prospects lour;
That though the last to fly was lingering Hope
When Epimetheus dared his box to ope,
Yet she no longer leads me by the nose
As our rude peasants do their buffaloes:
Those Fortune's wheels our painted cards[3] display,
In well known emblems, much my mind dismay;
They 're all alike, where'er the show we view,
And sure what all inculcate must be true:
One on the summit like an ass is seen,
(It needs no sphinx to guess what that must mean)
While each who climbs, as he is lifted near
The fatal top, in muzzle, head, and ear,
Grows asinine; for all that bears the show
Of human limbs or figure hangs below.
And I remember too that fickle thing
Called Hope; she came so gaily in the Spring,
When flowers were blooming, every twig in shoot;
She was clean off before September's fruit,
E'en when the Church for bridegroom deigned to name
Leo the Tenth[4]—that very day she came—
How many friends at those famed nuptials sat,
I marked each simpering face and scarlet hat,

And smiled—for Hope was smiling by their sides
The Calends through—she vanished at the Ides;
Vanished and left me stedfast in my plan,
To put no trust in promise or in man.
True, Hope had mounted when the Pope was pleased
To kiss my cheek, and when my hand he squeezed;
But scarce was ten short days' experience o'er,
When down she went, as low as high before.
Once, I am told, a gourd had thriv'n so fast,
The neighbouring pear-tree it in height surpassed;
That tree much marveled as it woke from sleep,
To see new fruit above its summit peep,
And cried, "What art thou?—Whence hast thou so soon
"To such vast height while I was slumbering grown?"
The gourd was tall, was insolent, and young,
Vaunting its race, it pointed whence it sprung:
"We gourds," it added, "lose no time, you see,
"In three short months I overtopped your tree."
"Indeed," replied the pear, "through wind and snow
"The height it cost me thirty years to grow
"Thou hast achieved in twinkling of an eye;
"But mark me, neighbour, if to shoot so high
"Short time suffice thee, let the seasons frown,
"And shorter still may serve to cut thee down."
So some[5], when Hope to Rome had brought me post,
Might in the pear-tree's strain have checked my boast;
And urging claims of longer growth, have said,
How for the Medici they risked their head,
In exile fostered them, to power recalled,
Raised their meek lamb, and Leo Pope installed.
Nay, had Sosena's spirit prophesied
Scarce less to them the moral had applied,
Such voice had sure foretold (could Dukes but hear)
When first that title[6] struck Lorenzo's ear.
To him, to Bibiena[7] (he perchance
Had fared the better had he staid in France),

To Rossi, to Nemours, to every guest
Who thronged the house in that gay hour of feast,
How all that greatness soon should pass away,
For plants of rapid growth, as rapidly decay;
Short time, it might have said, will blight your hope,
Duke, princes, dames, your new elected Pope,
All, all shall perish, ere Latona's Son
Eight times[8] complete his annual course has run.
But now to waste few words, for words are vain;
In me ambition and the thoughts of gain
Are dead long since. What Leo gave me not
Will scarce, methinks, from any Pope be got.
With other baits, then, tempt my appetite,
Say "Duty calls me," I perhaps may bite.
But know, to rise in rank or fortune higher,
I look not now, nor, what is more, desire:
You 'd better bid me quit this odious place[9],
These rugged rocks, and no less rugged race;
Tell me that fixed at Rome I should not fret
At petty ills that here my life beset,
Where I am forced to punish, fine, and threat;
Or worse, to grieve at that too frequent sight,
Rude brutal force insulting helpless right;
Say that I might, beneath Rome's classic shades,
Go rhyming on and woo the Aonian Maids;
Tell how the various wits that Court adorn,
In letters knowing, or with genius born;
Jovius for learning, Vida famed for verse,
Bembo, and numbers endless to rehearse,
On favourite themes would all day long converse.
And one among the throng might take the pains
To guide me, book in hand, through Rome's remains.
The forum, circus, and Suburra's street,
And Vesta's shrine, and Janus' sacred seat;
Then add, that if I write, or if I read,
Succour 's at hand in every case of need,

To clear my doubts, to trace the thoughts I seek,
In Latin, Tuscan, or more crabbed Greek.
And then for books! those mighty treasures, which,
From various lands, the city to enrich,
Pope Sixtus brought: such offers to resist
You well may term a strange capricious twist.
I answer like Emilius, lo! in sight
My spruce shod foot, the leather 's clean and bright;
You praise the work, but I who wear the shoe,
And only I, can where it pinches know.
Content, then, near my usual haunts to stay,
Who moves me tears me from myself away.
Not ease, not wealth, not all that Heav'n can give,
Could now persuade me far from thence to live.
E'en here, but that I sometimes fidget home,
And take a look at old Ferrara's dome
And the bronze statues[10] that our square adorn,
The distance would have killed me, or have worn
To skin and bone, a lean and famished wretch,
Like Dante's meagre ghosts[11], that strive the fruit to catch.
True, if to pine in absence were my doom,
I 'd gladly quit this sorry spot for Rome;
But, could I choose, on me our Prince should lay
His strict commands within his court to stay;
Call me to serve his person, keep me there,
Forbid my touching land or breathing air
Beyond Argenta's or Bondeno's[12] grounds;
Small though the space, I should not break my bounds.
Ask you why thus I love my well-known nest[13]?
Oh! friend, be tender! let me not be prest,
For, priest-like, you extort a secret sin,
And drag to light a truth that lurks within;
For should I all confess, you 'd cry, Behold,
The man last week was forty-nine years old!
'Tis well that hid in these deep dells I lie,
So shall my blush escape your searching eye.

Thank God, unseen I redden as I speak,
You view no deep vermilion in my cheek.
Though deep as Ambia's, or her daughter's face,
Or the fat canon's, who in market-place
Dropped the third flask he 'd stolen from a monk—
The third, for two he had already drunk.
Oh! you 'd be tempted, were you close to hear
That cause avowed, which must detain me near,
To take a cudgel and to break the bones
Of one who such egregious folly owns.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 307, line 2.
Now Clement 's Pope.

Clement the Seventh, the second Pope of the House of Medici, chosen 1523.

Note 2, page 307, line 11.
In scarlet shoes new crossed to mark his papal state.

When a Cardinal is chosen Pope a golden cross is embroidered on his scarlet shoes; this is alluded to in the original text,

——— e quando in su le rosse
Scarpe, Leone ebbe la croce d' oro.

Note 3, page 308, line 19.
Those Fortune's wheels our painted cards display.

A sort of cards called *Tarocco*, and common in Italy. The vicissitudes of fortune are, I believe, represented both in the games usually played with them and in the figures painted on them.

Note 4, page 308, lines 33 and 34.
E'en when the Church for bridegroom deigned to name
Leo the Tenth, that very day she came.

In the spring of 1513.

Note 5, page 309, line 25.
So some, &c.

The next twenty lines are somewhat obscure in the original. The sense appears to be as follows:

"When the hopes of preferment hurried me to Rome some might have applied the same language to me, inasmuch as they had better claims on Leo than myself, having exposed their lives in the service of the Medici, espoused their cause when they were banished, contributed to restore them, and finally to raise Leo to the Popedom. But perhaps a person in the Spirit of Sosena (who I understand was an active enemy of the Medici)

might have said to them, to Lorenzo when created Duke, and to his family and courtiers, that the moral of the fable applied to them also, inasmuch as they were revelling in prosperity and high in hopes, but in the course of eight years would all be swept away by the hand of death."

Throughout the passage there is a constant but indirect allusion to the preceding fable. The Translator, for the sake of perspicuity, has rendered that reference more direct.

Note 6, page 309, line 34.
When first that title struck Lorenzo's ear.

Lorenzo de Medici was made Duke of Urbino and Sinigaglia in 1516; he died in 1519.

Note 7, page 309, lines 35 and 36.
To him to Bibiena (he perchance
Had fared the better had he staid in France), &c.

Bibiena had been legate in France, and died soon after his return to Italy. His death in 1520 was imputed by public suspicion to poison. The names and description of the ladies who partook of the good fortunes of Lorenzo, and were dead before the expiration of eight years, are, to avoid prolixity, omitted in the translation, and only included under the words "every guest," v. 98, and "dames," v. 103.

Note 8, page 310, line 8.
Eight times complete his annual course has run.

Leo X. died in Dec. 1521. He had been elected Pope in 1513.

Note 9, page 310, line 17.
You 'd better bid me quit this odious place.

Garfagnana, of which the Poet was Governor.

Note 10, page 311, line 17.
And the bronze statues that our squares adorn.

In the square of Ferrara there are two bronze statues, an equestrian one of the Marquis Nicolo d'Este, and a sitting figure of the Masquis Borso, afterwards Duke of Ferrara.

Note 11, page 311, line 20.
Like Dante's meagre ghosts, that strive the fruit to catch.

An allusion to a passage in the twenty-fourth Canto of the Purgatorio, where the ghosts of gluttons are represented in a state of hunger, catching, like Tantalus, at the apples of a tree, which seems within their reach, but is removed beyond it whenever they stretch out their hands.

Note 12, page 314, line 27.

Beyond Argenta's or Bondeno's grounds.

Argenta and Bondeno are two places at the extremity of the Ferrarese territory, one twenty miles east, the other twenty miles west of Ferrara.

Note 13, page 314, line 29.

Ask you why thus I love my well-known nest?

Born at Reggio.

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